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SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES

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SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES

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FAULKNER AND THE ICELANDERS

JULIA MCGREW

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CERTAIN ages, certain civilizations, produce literary epics—whether it be in the poetry of earlier or the prose of later centuries. An epic is produced by an age as much as, if not more than, by an individual author, by the triumphs and failures of the author's generation as well as by his private experience. The term, "epic," is currently so loosely and inappropriately applied to long novels, lurid films, and military exploits, that it has lost precise meaning for the purposes of literary criticism in these days; furthermore, the term has corrupted and usurped the meaning of the term, "Heroic." Both terms can be illuminated definitively by considering the work of William Faulkner in the twentieth century, and the work of Icelandic saga-writers in the thirteenth century. Faulkner's novels and short stories concerning the opposition between the world of Sartoris and that of Snopes reveal the same conditions and requirements of epic which are visible in Icelandic family sagas: in both groups of fiction, the reader finds a similar portrait of tradition at war with non-tradition, of accepted morality in losing battle against encroaching immorality, of an instinctive sense of honor as it is gradually destroyed by the imposition from without of codified standards of right and wrong.

The astonishing historical fact about the family sagas is that they provide the only evidence we have for the tenth-century ideas and ideals of Iceland¹—ideals which we term, in Homeric comparison, Heroic. But the family sagas were written from the retrospective and analytical standpoint of their thirteenth-century authors.² The difference between tenth- and thirteenth-century Iceland is justly com-

¹ Jónasson, M., "Die Grundnormen des Handelns bei den Isländern heidnischer Zeit," *Beiträge z. Gesch. d. deutsch. Sprache u. Lit.*, 68, ½, (Halle, 1945-46), p. 139.

² Thomas, R. G., "The Sturlung Age as an Age of Saga Writing," *Germanic Review*, xxv, (1950), 50-66.

pared to the difference between the American South³ in its antebellum days—of an aristocratic allegiance to a code of honor sustained within each individual man, individual woman, individual family—and the postbellum decades when men deserted such a code of honor for the safety of respectability. (In Faulkner's novels, both financial greed and Calvinism create this definition of respectability.) When, in the early tenth century, the aristocrats and other freemen of Norway fled to a new world, in order to avoid Harald Fairhair's unifying and tyrannical power, they began their lives again in Iceland, with all the old ties of community and of family broken. Although similar bonds were rapidly re-formed, in family as in regional groups, the original pattern of social duties and responsibilities was completely lost. The Icelanders, as they almost at once entitled themselves, had to work out a new ethical system (and they were far more interested in doing this than they were in working out a system of land-tenure or of military service such as magnetized the attention of feudal Europe): their laws, their fictional literature, and their histories demonstrate the accuracy of Ker's statements that "they were in for rationalism before they knew it," that, indeed, they "had their Thucydides before their Herodotus."⁴

Forced, then, to analyze beliefs and motives which had long been taken for granted, they replaced an inherited and customary ethic by an experimental and reasoned. Iceland thus developed both an audience and a group of writers whose major interest in fiction was the analysis of beliefs, of ideals, of motives—that is, the analysis of human character. Seven centuries before the modern novelist's "concern with the individual personality," the Icelandic authors produced, in volume after volume of both history and fiction, stories which emphasize the moral and the mortal nature of human experience, the moral importance of each man's deeds, his opinions of another's deeds, and emphasize, also, their belief that a man's every deed expresses his personality so completely that when he dies his

³ I speak as much about the fictional view and use of such a "South" as about its historical existence; cf. Cash, *The Mind of the South*, (Anchor Books), *passim*, and Smith, H. N., *The Virgin Land*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), p. 151.

⁴ Ker, W. P., "Iceland and the Humanities," *Collected Essays*, I, (London, 1925), p. 139.

character remains a solid, memorable, defining accumulation of act and speech, "a slender obelisk" of particular experience⁵ which stands forever in the community's memory as a testament of good or evil. "Thorárin was a thoroughly overbearing man," says the author of the *Kormáks saga*. "We remember him because we see that his sons take after him and are boisterous, self-assertive fellows."⁶ Near them lived Bersi, "an honest, honorable, self-controlled man," and Steinvor, a handsome, "self-minded" (independent) woman, and Glúm, "an ill-tempered, unattractive fellow." These are the essential characteristics of the central characters, and logically from these characters develops the pointed and counterpointed story of a slaying in self-defense, a slaying in defense of Steinvor, a slaying in revenge, and, ultimately, the death of all the heroes in this tale.

Thus the subject or theme, and the narrative method, coalesce in the conception of character which underlies the family sagas. The persons in the stories characterize one another so thoroughly and so convincingly that the reader feels immediately involved in the ethical world created by the author. A favorite pastime of the Icelanders, attested both in their novels and in their histories, was to exchange guesses as to the probable actions or motives of various men in the community. "Who, does it seem to you, would do such an ill deed?" they ask. Or, "Who would be ill-natured enough to have said that?" Or, "What seems to you the character of a man who let such a slaying go unavenged?" Sometimes the actions implied in these guesses have already happened; sometimes they occur later in the story; sometimes they never happen at all, but enter the conversation only in order to characterize certain men and the certain ethical standards of the given story. Every man's every action indisputably reveals his ethical beliefs, or his lack of them. This form of characterization is developed with so little visible or audible evidence of an author that for too long a time he was mistaken for a scribe, and the sagas were considered purely "history,"—history copied, not fiction created.

As a characteristic of the audience as well as of the creating writer, this passionate interest in cause and effect in human nature enabled

⁵ Grönbech, V., *The Culture of the Teutons*, trans. W. Worster, 2 vols., (London, 1931), II, 218.

⁶ All translations are my own. This is from *Kormáks-saga*, ed. E. Ó. Sveinsson, in *Vatnsdala saga*, (*Íslensk Fornrit*, Reykjavík, 1939), VIII, 201.

the Icelandic author to present act and fact very simply, and thus to elaborate motive and ideal,⁷ to dramatize the beliefs of the earlier, Heroic, age for an audience familiar with the events and their significance. This is not at all to say that the Icelandic writers recreated the Heroic as a Golden Age, as an Eden lost: instead, they utilized Heroic, tenth-century situations, of conflict between loyalties, as their primary narrative material. They portrayed that Heroic, patriarchal society as one which made its own recognitions of fateful necessities. The phrases, "You have two choices," or, "There are two choices before us," recur thematically in the sagas, and take us to the definition of a Hero as central to the understanding of epic.

"Two choices do I give to you, Hrafnkel: the one, that you are to be taken out, away from your home, with those of your men whom I choose, and be killed," Sam says (in *Hrafnkels saga freysgoða*). "But if you will choose life, then go away from Aðalboli with all your people."⁸

The hero is he who refuses life on such conditions; the *Hrafnkalla* is the story of a man who does choose the "conditional existence," returns and takes revenge on Sam by such unbelievable and improbable means that the story clearly gives satiric comment on the unethical use of the Heroic term, "choice."

So often are these lines the Heroic refrain in moments of critical decision, that in a late saga such as the *Njála*, there is unmistakable parody, in the Falstaffian interlude with Björn. Björn, a man who is very *sjálfhalinn* (self-praising, boastful) and who is spurred by his far more courageous wife to help Kári in the latter's escape from Flósi, stands on the heath with Kári. They see a group of Flósi's men, under Sigfús, approaching, and Kári asks meditatively what they ought to do if the enemy should ride them down. Björn replies:

"There are only two choices: one, ride away from this dangerous place, northward along the cliffs, and let them ride past us; or, wait in case some of them lag behind, then attack them."⁹

⁷ Gehl, W., *Ruhm und Ehre bei den Nordgermanen: Studien zum Lebensgefühl der Isländischen Saga*, Neue Deutsche Forschungen, Abt. Deutsch. Phil., III (Berlin, 1937). See especially pages 72-76 for discussion of the idea of honor as it became a literary theme as well as a means of plotting in the sagas.

⁸ *Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða*, ed. Guðni Jónsson, (Íslendinga sögur, 8, Reykjavík, 1945), pp. 26-27.

⁹ *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed., Valdimar Ásmundarson, (Íslendinga sögur, 10, Reykjavík, 1910), p. 401.

After their first skirmish with Sigfús' sons, during which Björn fights, although not very willingly, they have time to discuss further what they can do to improve their defenses for another attack, or for an ambush. Kári again solemnly asks Björn's advice, so that Björn is able to talk himself gradually back up to his original conviction of his own dauntlessness. But then, during their night-watch, when Björn wakes Kári to announce (still boldly), "now is the time you need me; the enemy is coming!", Kári must repeat, "Now there are two choices before us." The author of the story emphasizes the element of parody by giving to Kári the additional lines: "The one is that you should stand at my back and use my shield and body to protect yourself (if they can be of any use to you); the other, that you climb on your horse and ride away as fast as you can."¹⁰

The word, "choice," indicates the Heroic emphasis on the will required to choose, and on the standards by which one chooses. The exigencies of the blood-feud offered an author a situation or series of situations. of interlocking personal demands, for his plot. Gísli, for example, had to avenge the death of one brother-in-law on his own brother, or else betray a sworn brother; if he chose vengeance, he would thus incur the relentless enmity of his sister (the wife of the slain brother-in-law).¹¹ In such situations, an author could reveal his characters at the significant moments of their choice between conflicting loyalties to kin, loyalties to ideals, or their choice between life and death, life and honor. The code of vengeance as it had operated in the Heroic, tenth century also offered the thirteenth-century writer a standard of values against which men could be measured as heroes. These situations are not entirely fictions of the author's dramatic imagination; they come straight from the Heroic Age. But they give us also, by tragic contrast, insight into the authors' age, the Sturlunga Age, when choice had become less one between loyalties than one between an ideal of loyalty and no ideal at all. When Ingjald, in the *Njála*, is spurred to revenge by his sister, Hróðny, she reminds him of all he owes to Njál and of his present duty to support Njál, even though he, Ingjald, is related by blood to Njál's enemy, Flósi. In

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 411.

¹¹ *Saga Gísla Súrssonar*, I og II, ed., Benedikt Sveinsson, (Íslendinga sögur, 25, Reykjavík, 1922). See Prinz, R., *Die Schöpfung der Gísla Saga Súrssonar: Ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Isländischen Saga*, (Breslau, 1935).

Grönbech's words, "Men pondered and speculated over this mystery in the ordering of life, that a man could be driven against his will to harm his kin. In the Germanic, the case is clearly stated: *frith* was inviolable, but honor too had its own validity, so that the two could collide with such force as to destroy both on the impact, and the man with them."¹² The hesitation, the frightened circumspection, with which Ingjald finally decides to support Njál (but only by warning Njál and his sons of future danger!), bespeaks the author's thirteenth century, in which it was futile to choose according to honor, because so few men adhered to or understood such a standard. And the limp caution with which Ingjald finally speaks and acts is the author's meaningful alteration of original detail in the interest of showing how complex an adjustment of Heroic standards was necessary by his time.

The meaning of the refrain for the Heroic Age, rather than for the thirteenth century's interpreters, is difficult to estimate. That there was really no choice at all is the heart of the matter, "hope not being hope/until all good ground for hope/vanished," as Marianne Moore phrases it. But we can see quite clearly the choice which faced the thirteenth-century writer: he could, like Saxo, idealize the Heroic past, try to reanimate in fiction that civilization whose code of honor must have seemed a saving grace of and for men in his own age of bloodshed and betrayal; or, he could admit the inadaptability of such a standard to the later centuries and accept the Christian determinations between good and evil. The Icelandic author did neither. He accurately and completely handed on his knowledge, not of the facts, but of the nature of the Heroic past, without distorting it either in direction of romance or of idealization; he accepted the thirteenth century's responsibility to look backward neither in illusion nor in scorn, but critically.

If what a man is brings on disaster, the fault, for the Icelandic writers of family saga, lies not with the gods. Nor is the fault to be identified with Adam's sin. Christianity had not yet given to Iceland, as it had to the rest of Europe, a system of moral values to be imposed upon secular story. The authors of the sagas found their natural ethical standpoint halfway between that of pagan, Heroic society

¹² Grönbech, *op. cit.*, I, 40.

and that of the Sturlunga Age; they founded their ethics in an historian's critical and a novelist's imaginative interpretation of past events. In their use of Heroic material, they fulfilled a definition of a dramatically-realized idea given much later:

There is only one way to dramatize an idea; and that is by putting on the stage a human being possessed by that idea, yet none the less a human being with all the human impulses which make him akin to and interesting to us.¹³

Self-reliance and the pride which is an honest recognition of one's abilities, an unaffected joy in physical strength, a courage which exalts the freedom thus earned rather than the violence thus displayed, loyalty to kin and friend, an active acquiescence in fate rather than a passive resignation to death: these were the components of the Heroic ethic, and, therefore, form a descriptive definition of a hero. In the sagas, as in Faulkner's novels, such pride, such independence, such honor, are those human characteristics which attract tragic¹⁴ story.

In Iceland, such conceptions of pride and honor were, apparently paradoxically, fused with a strong desire for peace. This gives us the only logical explanation for Njál's otherwise inexplicable participation in Gunnar's doomed career, itself part of the senseless violence inherent in a later century's use of the blood-feud to settle personal dislikes rather than to defend a community against the forces of anarchy. In the sagas, we can watch an historical as well as an ethical transformation of Heroic values and at the burning-in of Njál, the reader sees straight to the heart of the change. For in this story of the great friendship between Njál, a lawman whose strength in defense of honor is intellectual rather than physical, and Gunnar, a conventional Heroic fighter for whom the code of honor-bound revenge is as mighty as his famous sword-arm, the author presents the novelist's implicit statement that such a friendship, such loyalty, is a truer indication of the essential dignity of man than are the aberrant indignities occasioned by men who replace loyalty with schemes, friends, with bought or compromising followers. The *Njála* was written by one who saw Njál's doom, not only Gunnar's, writ clear in the characters of evil men, who used a storm-center such as Hallgerðr from which to widen

¹³ Shaw, G. B., *The Perfect Wagnerite*, (London, 1899), p. 30.

¹⁴ Lattimore, R., Introduction to translation of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, p. 4.

the circles of all those other injustices which underlay the death of a hero and the death of the Heroic ideal.

In a nation which began stateless and grew to statehood within documented sight, the virtues of the Heroic became the vices of the Sturlunga epoch. The authors of the family sagas use this irony, that the history of Iceland is itself a tragedy, as Faulkner uses the central, tragic irony in the history of the South. The destruction of the Southern aristocracy's ideals of courage, honor and loyalty by the forces of opportunism, dishonesty and dishonor gives an historical and a tragic backdrop to Faulkner who, in his short stories and novels, makes similar use of such narrative material in order to preserve the events and legends, to preserve and interpret the tragic and comic incidents, of the glorious past and the inglorious present in Southern history, and to telescope intricately past and present so that he shows the downfall of families, of individuals, and of a way of life. Quentin Compson's distorted sense of honor¹⁵ is the product of an age in which the earlier, still vital sense of honor had become moribund. Obviously, the decline of the hero's code is not exactly the same for thirteenth-century Iceland as for twentieth-century America: the neurotic, fevered disillusionment of Faulkner's characters is as unlike the simplicity of violence in the Icelanders as the general complexity of twentieth-century civilization is unlike the thirteenth century. But the pattern of decline is the same; and the cause—the increasing power of evil men who use petrified codes, originally created by men of good intentions, for unethical purposes—is the same.

When Mr. Compson, speaking to Quentin, said, "... time is your misfortune," he spoke for all Faulkner's aristocrats who were forced to live through the change from the days of trust to those of distrust. Those who created Icelandic sagas also inherited an ideal of honor as a "mausoleum." Quentin's search for an historical and a moral heritage which he can accept (the search which underlies his entire, intense, sceptical questioning of the life of Thomas Sutpen) leads to his refusal to accept a world obviously declining into the unheroic. His father's description of that earlier time, "a dead time," is: "... and (there were) people too as we are, and victims too as we are, but victims of a different circumstance, simpler, and, therefore, integer for integer, larger, more heroic—

¹⁵ Faulkner, W., *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom! Absalom!*

and the figures themselves more heroic too, not dwarfed and involved but distinct, uncomplex, who had the gift of loving once or dying once instead of being diffused and scattered creatures drawn blindly limb from limb from a grab-bag and assembled, author and victim too of a thousand homicides and a thousand copulations and divorcements."¹⁶

Guðrun might have said precisely this in her last years, looking back on her love, Kjartan and her husband, Bolli—on Kjartan whom she had destroyed by refusing him her love, and on the tragic life of Bolli who had in great grief slain Kjartan, his friend, because honor to Guðrun demanded this of him. Far smaller men peopled the world of Guðrun's old age, as they peopled the world after Njál's death.

In Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*, *Sartoris*, *The Unvanquished*, *The Sound and the Fury*, and in many of his short stories about a South which is still visible to his readers' memories, history is transmuted into particular fictions in the interests of dramatizing a thesis about human history. In this sense, the body of Faulkner's best work defines the continuing possibilities of epic. The older generation in the South, as in the world of Blund-Ketill, Njál, Gísli, Egil, speaks always for a proud, individual judgment of human conduct. Mr. Compson, in one of his digressive arguments with Quentin as to the value of living, sums up the epic attitude in these words: "... every man is the arbiter of his own virtues." Mr. Compson is one of the last believing, but ineffectual, members of

that long line of men who had had something in them of decency and pride even after they had begun to fail at the integrity and the pride had become mostly vanity and self-pity: from the expatriate who had had to flee his native land with little else except his life yet who still refused to accept defeat, through the man who gambled his life and his good name twice and lost twice and declined to accept that either, and the one who with only a clever small quarterhorse for tool avenged his dispossessed father and grandfather and gained a principality, and the brilliant and gallant governor and the general who although he failed at leading in battle brave and gallant men at least risked his own life too in the failing, to the cultured dipsomaniac who sold the last of his patrimony not to buy drink but to give one of his descendants at least the best chance in life he could think of.¹⁷

Jason Compson the fourth speaks for the world which followed, when he says, in one of his usual unheroic and avaricious moments of in-

¹⁶ Faulkner, W., *Absalom! Absalom!*, (New York, 1951), p. 89.

¹⁷ Faulkner, W., *The Sound and the Fury*, (New York, 1946), p. 195.

sight: "Blood! Governors and generals! It's a damn good thing we never had any kings and presidents; we'd all be down there at Jackson chasing butterflies!" Jason and the newer generation, like the newer generation of all America, like the generation of Flósi and Hrafnkel, is revealed by Faulkner as one incompetent in and averse to setting up codes, living according to ideals, by which man can, in Robert Penn Warren's phrase, "define himself as human."¹⁸

Granny Millard's dispensation of law, food, mules, money, and standards of right and wrong, during the harsh days of Southern defeat at the end of the Civil War, is a clear portrait of the best in heroic ideals; her actions belong to Njál's world in their independent and even obstinate maintenance of an individual sense of honor in the face of inevitable defeat. At the burning-in of Njál, when Bergþóra is offered the chance to leave Njál, she refuses. Considering the world of lesser men in which she would have lived, we can see that she left to the victorious attackers a world in which the very term "victory" and "defeat" had lost their traditional meaning.

Like Bayard Sartoris, Njál's son, Skarpheðinn, in his sharp-featured, sharp-tongued way, smiles scornfully on the changed and changing standards of his society, and recognizes that he is to die at the hands of ignoble men (or, as for Bayard Sartoris) for little purpose. Like Njál, who had offered his sons to Gunnar, for protection, Skarpheðinn offers escape to his foster-brother, Kári, but himself remains to die with Njál. This is in no way an act of sacrifice in the Christian sense. If it were, the story would end differently: it would not be a tragedy. For the tragedy is not that men die, but that the best men die uselessly, for ideals already dead, and that they know it. The end of Njál's story (not of the entire saga) does not show man's satisfied discovery of a new world of Christian values; like the end of Faulkner's stories (if, indeed, there is any end to Faulkner's creations or possibilities of creation in Yoknapatawpha County, or to our experience of dishonor, of betrayal, of cowardice in the twentieth century), the end of Njál's story makes very clear that there is no adequate replacement for the earlier ethic, for an ethic in which each man set up standards for, and within himself. In all of Faulkner's works, something much

¹⁸ Warren, R. P., "William Faulkner," *William Faulkner: Two Decades of Criticism*, ed., F. J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery, (Michigan State College Press, 1954), p. 87.

larger than the particular details of Yoknapatawpha's history and inhabitants is shown. On the level of particular fable, Faulkner shows the way in which the South has become the victim of itself and of its own ethical institutions; on the level of universal, epic story, Faulkner shows the tragedy of man's incapacity to live beyond the death of morality.

In *Light in August*, Faulkner, too, is not concerned with allegiance to any gods, but primarily with men's judgments of right and wrong. That there is good and evil in mankind and that some men are able to distinguish between the two is a fact of human experience for the authors of epic. Faulkner dramatizes this fact by showing the distinctions made from within his characters, not from the external standpoint of society. Carl Benson's phrases about the theme of *Light in August* most aptly relate it to the themes in the family sagas: Faulkner is showing us "that the chaos of mixed good and evil in which we live is a chaos which stems from (1) limited or lip service to the moral (community) orders which are selfishly conceived, and so corrupted, (2) human incapacity to adopt any code without its ultimately becoming inhumane convention—humane conviction inevitably hardens into inhuman convention."¹⁹ In Hightower's denials and terrors and hesitations, and their final defeat of Christmas's ideals (again, like Quentin Compson's, so distorted as to be in themselves a betrayal of ideals), Faulkner presents in epic terms a fact of human history: man cannot turn back time, cannot force ideals into rebirth from corrupted individuals, corrupted standards.

"I mind how I said to you once," Byrón Bunch says to Hightower, "that there is a price for being good the same as for being bad; a cost to pay. And it's the good men that cant deny the bill when it comes around. They cant deny it for the reason that there aint any way to make them pay it, like a honest man that gambles. The bad men can deny it; that's why dont anybody expect them to pay on sight or any other time. But the good cant. Maybe it takes longer to pay for being good than for being bad. And it wont be like you haven't done it before, haven't already paid a bill like it once before. . . ."²⁰

In the *Bandamanna saga*, irony is extended to satiric statement, but the theme is tragic in spite of the laughter aroused. And the

¹⁹ Benson, C., "Thematic Design in LIGHT IN AUGUST," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, (October, 1954), p. 541.

²⁰ Faulkner, W., *Light in August*, (New York, 1950), p. 341.

nature of the tragedy is that phrased by Byron Bunch. The story shows the way in which man's avarice, ambition, and desire for physical safety destroy all real justice. Not only the particular story and the theme, but also the frequent use of the law's dramatic arena, the court, shows the Icelandic author's and Faulkner's epic use of the historical reality (law as the dramatic historical evidence²¹ of men's ethical beliefs). Behind the comedy in *The Hamlet*, and *The Town*, no prince exists or by his death purges Yoknapatawpha of the crimes and chicaneries of the Snopeses. And in the *Bandamanna*, there is no mention of "choice," "fate," or *drengskapr*, the Heroic terms. All is *litllmannligt*, for the vices of the confederated men lack even satanic grandeur.

Fundamental to the creation, and to the definition, of epic is the relation between the sources and the orally transmitted legends and facts which precede the final narrative. Both Faulkner and the Icelandic authors utilized and transformed earlier material in the same way—the way of the epic. Faulkner uses those details of individuals' actions, speeches, gestures which derive from the vast reservoir of family legend, local gossip, regional anecdote. A similar substratum of orally retained story underlies the saga. (For a long time, indeed, scholars thought that the historian's interest in local detail and an unsophisticated society's passion for genealogy as itself a kind of poetry were the primary materials of the saga. But it is now clear that there is an author, an artistically unique creator even if a "final author," of each saga.²²) This final author is one who, like Homer, used earlier story for new purposes. He is one who, like Faulkner, selects persons and events from inherited material with the serious, artist's, intention of reflecting the whole world of human experience in his particular world of Yoknapatawpha or Vatnsdæl, the new purpose of interpreting history, of revealing the meaning behind the daily, often confusing, more often incompletely seen, pageant of single event.

²¹ An interesting study could be made of Faulkner's and the Icelanders' use of law, in their fictions, as a pattern of particular history, and of scenes in law-courts for the dramatic revelation of character.

²² Heusler, A., *Die allgermanische Dichtung*, 2e Aufl., *Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft*, (Potsdam, 1941); Sigurður Nordal, "Sagalitteraturen," *Nordisk Kultur*, VIII, B, (Copenhagen, 1953), pp. 235 and 247.

In his use of inherited story, Faulkner has reanimated the oral techniques of epic. Oral versions of earlier events are used because they, themselves, contribute a selective alteration of perspective, of the reader's understanding and, consequently, of his moral judgments. That Virginia Du Pre should tell the Sartoris family about the manner of Bayard Sartoris' death, prior to the second battle at Manassas, means that the telling is shaped by the background and beliefs of Virginia Du Pre, and itself shapes a judgment of the event, in terms of our judgment on Virginia Du Pre's life. Virginia Du Pre, "now wearing that expression of indomitable and utter weariness which all Southern women had learned to wear," narrates the story as forever it will be understood in her South:

She had told the story many times (at eighty she still told it, on occasions usually inopportune), and as she grew older, the tale itself grew richer and richer, taking on a mellow splendor like wine; until what had been a harebrained prank of two heedless and reckless boys wild with their own youth had become a gallant and finely tragical focal point to which the race had been raised out of the old miasmic swamps of spiritual sloth by two angels valiantly fallen and strayed, altering the course of human events and purging the souls of men.²³

Thus the story, embodying an ideal, determining a literary inheritance, reflecting an age, was available to the writer of a later generation, a fiction in its own right but also the nucleus of the writer's larger, epic, fiction about the death of the ideal, the inheritance, the age.²⁴

The parallels between these two bodies of literature, at first thought so remote from one another both in date and in form, are those of theme and intention. Obviously, the style of the sagas, unlike the structure, shows none of the complexity of levels on which Faulkner investigates human consciousness, combines remembered, with dreamed, with present action and thought. But the themes, the intentions, and much in the nature of the sources, are comparable in Icelandic sagas and in Faulkner's works. The authors share in a novelist's vision of the tragic meaning of human history—a vision by which

²³ Faulkner, W., *Sartoris*, (Signet Book, New York, 1953), p. 33.

²⁴ A more sophisticated use of such autobiographical form for the shifting kaleidoscope of the teller's and the hearer's ethical ideas may be analyzed in Faulkner's *Absalom! Absalom!*, (chap. 5, Rosa's long soliloquy) and in the *Gisla saga* (the skaldic verses), *ed. cit.*

each author orders and selects characters and events for a particular story so as to disclose truths of human nature not of fact. Even this discursive comparison of some few of the elements in the two bodies of literature suggests a clearer definition of epic. It is not enough, at this stage in the novel's extension of the epic tradition, to say that epic tells what most probably happened, not what did happen; or to say, in Tillyard's phrase, that the epic communicates "the feeling of what it was like to be alive at the time."²⁵ We must also define epic in terms which show the organic relationship between the age of the events and persons in the story and the age of the author. The conditions of epic, then, are found partially in an historical situation—the total disruption of a social and moral order and a resulting conflict between the dying and the newer order—and partially in an artistic consciousness, in the capacity of certain authors for transmuting known fact or lore into the realities which are born only of the creative imagination, and in his capacity to shape such realities into a narrative which bespeaks the tragedy inevitable for good men who live in a world divided between good and evil, between ethical and unethical actions. The conditions of epic suggest its requirements: an historical and artistic sensibility in its creator, and an historical sensibility in its audience.

²⁵ Tillyard, E. M. W., *The English Epic and Its Background*, (London, 1954), p. 12.

THE *u*- AND *w*-UMLAUTS IN OLD NORSE

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I

*Did Secondary *u(<*w) Cause Labialization of *i>y?*

THE problem under discussion concerns the prehistorical *w*- and *u*-umlauts (labialization) of **i>y* when the **w* and **u* had been lost through contraction in the end syllable. Here the differentiation between the *w*- and the *u*-umlaut is clear from such examples as **triggwaR>tryggr* (Goth. *triggws*) 'faithful' vs. *lipuR* (Goth. *lipus*) *>liðr* 'limb.' When in the historical period the *w* was preserved in initial-syllable division, the *w* (ON *v*, *u*) labialized the *i>y*; e. g. **trigg-wan>trygg-van* and the like. It is universally assumed that in order to account for the loss of the *w* in the end syllable of **trigg-waR* the phoneme **w* was first vocalized to the pure vowel **u*, resulting in an intermediate form **trigguR>tryggr* on a level with **lipuR>liðr*, but this leaves the discrepancy between the labialized *y* in *tryggr* and the *i* without labialization in *liðr* unexplained. According to the current view, the secondary **u* in **trigg-uR* caused the labialization of *i>y* in *tryggr* because it represented the vocalization of **w*. This hypothesis cannot be valid in view of the fact that both secondary **u* (<**w*) and primary (PG) *u* represented a non-syllabic pure vowel **u* in the end syllable: **trigg-uR:lip-uR*. Here secondary and primary *u* had simply fallen together. It is the purpose of this paper to show that the labialization of *i>y* in **triggwaR>tryggr* was due to the *w*-umlaut before the time when the **w* was vocalized to **u*: **trigg-wR>*trygg-wR>*trygg-uR>tryggr*. This hypothesis preserves the integrity of the *w*-umlaut and at the same time removes the necessity of assuming a different phonetic quality for secondary and primary **u*.

Noreen states the current view, as follows: "*i>y* (geschlossenes) in folgenden fällen: a) wo *u* aus *w* entstanden ist . . . *tryggr* (**trigguR*, vgl. aschwed. run. acc. *Siktriku*; got. *triggws*) treu. . . ."

If Noreen's assumption that the secondary **u* caused the labialization of **i>y* is correct, then we must assume that this secondary **u*

¹ Cf. A. Noreen, *Allisl. Grm.*⁴, under the caption '*u*-umlaut von *é*, *i*, *í*', §77, 5a.

did not represent the pure vowel **u*, but retained the bilabial quality of the semivowel **w*. That primary and secondary *u* represented different phonetic values is impossible to prove and there is no convincing evidence in support of it. The runic form *Sik-triku* furnishes no evidence that the *i* in *-triku* was not labialized, because the futhark had no letter corresponding to the phoneme *y*, so that the labialized *y* (<*i*) could not be orthographically represented. The form *-triku* could represent the runic spelling of a phonetically correct *-trygg-u*. The non-syllabic pure vowel *u* of the final syllable over against the labialized *y* of the stem syllable likewise furnishes no proof that this secondary *u* caused the labialization, because the labialization could have occurred *before* the time when the **w* in final position was vocalized to **u*: **trigw* > **tryggw* > *-tryggu*. We have here the old *w*-umlaut of *i* > *y* as in **lingwa* > **lyngw* > **lyngu* > *lyng* 'heather.'

In confirmation of the 'u-umlaut' of *i* > *y* Noreen adds the following statement:² "Vor nicht aus *w* entstandenem *u* ist der umlaut durch ausgleichung innerhalb des paradigmas unterblieben (s.O.v. Friesen,³ N. Spr. II, 7 ff.), z. b. *litr* statt **lytr* (adän. *lyt*, ndän. *løð*) farbe nach gen. *lilar* u. s. w. Von **sigu*-(ahd. *sigu*) > *syg*- sind doch in (bes. anorw.) personennamen spuren häufig, z. b. *Syg-ný*, *-riðr* (bei Saxo *Sygrutha*), *-tryggr* (rschw. *SyktrykR*⁴), *-urþr* u. a. m. neben *Signý* usw. zu *sigr* sieg."

The postulation of an ON form **lytr* as reflected in the ODan. form *lyt* furnishes no evidence of the 'u-umlaut' of *i* > *y* in ON inasmuch as the initial *l* could have later in ODan. caused the labialization; cf. the labialization through post-vocalic *l* already in ON *silfr* > *sylfr* 'silver'.⁵ There is no reason to resort to leveling in the paradigm in order to account for the nom. sg. form *litr*. The leveling occurred where the *i* persisted in the stem syllable over against the vowel *a* of the end syllable, as in the gen. sg. case form *lit-ar*, which would have yielded a phonetically correct form **let-ar* (*a*-umlaut of *i* > *e*).

² Cf. Noreen §77, 5a, Anm. 3.

³ Von Friesen's work is not available to me, so that I can refute his argument only through the examples which Noreen has selected.

⁴ In the runic form *Syk-trykR* the *y* represents the Latin transcription of either *y* or *i* and hence furnishes no proof of the 'u-umlaut' of *i* > *y*. Cf. my remarks on the runic form *Sik-triku*.

⁵ Cf. Noreen §85. The labialization through *l* and *m* was chiefly confined to late ONorwegian; cf. *lþsum* (for *lesum*), *mþgum* (for *megum*), etc.

As for the labialization of *i* > *y* in compound names with *Syg-* as the first element, it is significant that *syg* did not occur as a variant of the simple form *sig* 'victory'. Therefore only the form *Sig-* without labialization could have been carried over from the simplex into the compound. Since the form *Syg-* with labialization was restricted to the compound, we must assume that the labialization represents a secondary phonetic development since the compound was based on the simplex and therefore of later origin than the simplex. This speaks against Noreen's assumption that *Syg-* (<**sign*, with 'u-umlaut') represents the primary form. If a primary form *syg* existed, why was it lost in the simplex, but preserved in the compound? Noreen does not attempt to answer this question.

It must be kept in mind that *Syg-* occurred only sporadically, whereas *Sig-* represents the standard form carried over from the simplex. Usually only *Sig-* occurred without the doublet *Syg-*, as in *Sig-arr*, *Sig-fǫðr*, etc.⁶ The labialized *y* in *Syg-* occurred chiefly in ONorw., which developed certain phonetic characteristics in which (Late) OIcel. also shared. One of these was vowel harmony between the non-labial vowel *i* of the stem syllable and the labial vowel *y* of the end syllable, resulting in the labialization of *i* > *y*: *i*:*y* > *y*:*y*, and *i*:*ý* > *y*:*ý*. Examples are: *Sig-tryggr* (masc.) > *Syg-tryggr*, *Sig-ný* (fem.) > *Syg-ný*.⁷ This pattern could have been analogically extended to compound names with *Sig-* in which the second element did not contain the vowel *y* (or *ý*): *Sig-urðr* > *Syg-urðr* like *Sig-tryggr* > *Syg-tryggr*, and *Sig-riðr* > *Syg-riðr* like *Sig-ný* > *Syg-ný*. Thus a new pattern was established with the doublet forms *Sig-*:*Syg-* as the first element of the compound formations. Noreen's assumption that the labialized *y* in *Syg-* was due to "u-umlaut" rests upon a hypothetical basis because there is no *factual* evidence that a simplex **syg* ever existed. If it had existed, we should expect, instead of the single form *sig*, the doublets *sig*:**syg* for the simplex as well as in the compound based upon the simplex. Only in the compound was the ONorw.-OIcel. vowel harmony possible. Vowel harmony, e.g., in *Sig-tryggr* > *Syg-*

⁶ Noreen's "häufig" is incorrect as referring to the comparative frequency of the two forms.

⁷ Examples for *y*:*i* > *y*:*y* are *syst-kin* > *syst-kyn* 'brothers and sisters'; ONorw. *þykk-ir* > *þykk-yr* 'seems,' *myk-ill* > *myk-yll* 'large,' *lyk-ill* > *lyk-yll* 'key.' See Noreen §146, Anm. 5.

tryggr, furnishes *factual* evidence that the labialization of $i > y$ was a secondary phonetic development and not due to a primary "u-umlaut" of $i > y$ as Noreen assumes for the simplex *sig* > **syg* (< **sigu*).

Since there is no convincing evidence that the pure vowel *u*, whether primary (PG *u*) or secondary (*u* < PG *w* = *uu*), labialized the $i > y$, the apparent dichotomy between $i:u$ (**liluR* > *litr*) without labialization and $y:u$ (**trigguR* > *tryggr*) with labialization can easily be resolved by assuming that the *w*-umlaut of $i > y$ occurred *before* the time when the **w* was vocalized to the pure vowel *u*: **triggwaR* > **tryggwaR* > **tryggwR* > **trygguR* > *tryggr*. The prehistorical *w*-umlaut could then be on a level with the historical *w*-umlaut because in both chronological stages the *w* was preserved before a vowel in initial-syllable division: **trigg-waR* > **trygg-waR* parallel to **trigg-wan* > *trygg-van* and the like. The postulation of any prehistorical umlaut, when the prehistorical evidence is lacking, can be determined only by its end results. Therefore the term "u-umlaut" as referring to a prehistorical labialization of $i > y$ is a misnomer so long as the **u* of the end syllable represented the pure vowel and not the bilabial **u* = **w*. Since *u* and *i* are both high vowels, the *u* of the end syllable kept the *i* of the stem syllable intact as in WGmc.: **siþuR* (Goth. *siþus*) > *siðr*: OHG *silu* 'custom.' Here we have the *u*-umlaut of Proto-Gmc $\bar{e} > i$ (cf. PIE **sedhos* > Grk. *ēthos* 'custom'). Since the *u* of the end syllable was lost in ON *siðr*, we may properly designate the effect of the *u* upon the vowel \bar{e} of the stem syllable as the 'old u-umlaut' of $\bar{e} > i$.

Noreen's arguments in favor of the "u-umlaut" of $i > y$ are far from convincing because his evidence is fundamentally based upon two false premises: (1) upon the runic evidence, which must be discarded as ambiguous, and (2) upon the reconstruction of primary from secondary forms when the two forms are not on the same phonetic level. These reconstructed forms are purely hypothetical, for they are not recorded in our texts. Not a single example of the *u*-declension with radical vowel *i* is recorded with labialized *y* as Noreen assumes for **lytr* (reflected in ODan. *lyt*); cf. *limr*: *liðr* 'limb,' *friðr* 'peace,' *kvistr* 'branch,' *kvitr* 'rumor,' etc. Furthermore, he has given no reason why a secondary vocalized **u* (< **w*) could cause labialization of $i > y$ (**trigg-uR* > *tryggr*) whereas primary (PG) **u* did not (**liþ-uR* > *liðr*), since both *u*'s had obviously fallen together. Since

Noreen's conclusions represent the current view, the results of my investigation furnish plausible evidence that the traditional point of view must be at least an open question. There is no convincing evidence for the '*u*-umlaut' of *i* > *y* (whether primary or secondary), but only for the *w*-umlaut (both primary and secondary).

II

The u-Umlaut of e > ø in the Preterit Plural Paradigm of the Reduplicating Verbs

The *u*-umlaut of *e* > *ø* in the preterit pl. paradigm of the reduplicating verbs occurred when the reduplicating prefix was retained, but not when the prefix was lost: e.g. *sá* 'to sow,' *sera:serun* > *sþrun*, *róa* 'to row,' *rera:rerun* > *rþrun*; *falla* 'to fall,' *fell:fellun*. We may call these two types class I and class II, respectively. The problem under discussion is to explain the restriction of this *u*-umlaut to class I. None of the non-reduplicating verbs contained the radical vowel *e* in the preterit pl. paradigm, and when the *e* occurred there in the weak verbs, it was due to the *j*-umlaut of **a* and hence was not capable of labialization to *ø*: e.g. **saljan* 'to sell' > *selja*, *selda:seldun*; **arfjan* 'to inherit' > *erfða:erfðun*.

Since classes I and II of the reduplicated verbs were differentiated by two factors, viz. (1) the preservation and loss of the reduplicating prefix, and (2) the preservation and the lack of *u*-umlaut, it is logical to assume that the restriction of the *u*-umlaut to class I was for some reason due to the preservation of the prefix. This reason could have been the fact that both the prefix and the radical vowel *e* served as designating the preterit tense in class I, whereas in class II only the radical vowel *e* served in this function of tense designation: *sá*, *sera:serun*; *falla*, *fell:fellun*, both types with vowel variation (*á:e*, *a:e*) as in the ablaut variations characteristic of strong verbs, but with the prefix *se-* preserved in class I. With *sá*, *sera:serun* with reduplicating prefix and variation of the radical vowel in the preterit tense compare Gothic *saian*, *sat-sō:sat-sōun* (with *ō* borrowed from the 6th ablaut series, cf. *fōr:fōrun*). In ON *sera:serun* the prefix became the stem syllable, but nevertheless could have preserved (i.e. inherited) its original function as the designation for the preterit tense. The labialization of the radical vowel in the prefix *se-* could in no wise affect

its function of tense designation, for a prefix never loses its function because of secondary phonetic shifts (cf. Goth. *us* > ON *or*, prep., > *ǫr*-[*kostr*], prefix). Therefore in *serun* the *e* underwent the phonetically correct labialization to *ǫ* (*sǫrun*) because the *e* represented the prefix vowel. The vowel *e* in *fellun* did not represent the *e* of the prefix syllable, but was due to contraction of the prefix vowel *e* together with the stem vowel *a* (**fē*)-*fallun* > *fellun*); cf. Gothic *falpan* 'to fold,' *fat-falþ*:*fat-falþun*. The *e* in the prefix syllable represented PG *ē* (= Gothic *ai*), but a secondary ON *e* in the stem syllable of class II. These two *e*'s had fallen together and we should expect them to act in the same way under like phonetic conditions unless there was some factor present in the one type which was lacking in the other.⁸ The forms without labialization (*sera*:*serun*, *fell*:*fellun*) represent the primary pattern with the radical vowel *e* in the pl. paradigm borrowed from the sg. paradigm (cf. *erum*, *eruð*, *eru* of the present tense of *vera* 'to be' without labialization through leveling in favor of the sg. paradigm *em*, *ert*, *er*). Since the two forms *serun* and *fellun* were obviously on the same phonetic level, it does not seem probable that the differential element between the two classes could have been of phonetic origin (*serun* > *sǫrun*, but not *fellun* > **fǫllun*).

Noreen calls attention to the labialization of *e* > *ǫ* through pre-vocalic *r* in the type of *rerun* > *rǫrun* in class I.⁹ That the pre-vocalic *r* had a rounding effect upon the vowel *e* cannot be denied, but this in no wise vitiates the assumption that the *u*-umlaut of *e* > *ǫ* was the fundamental factor in the labialization. The rounding effect of the pre-vocalic *r* was a secondary factor which resulted in a combined labialization. This assumption is supported by the fact that the labialization due to the *u*-umlaut of *e* > *ǫ* occurred in unaccented syllables without pre-vocalic *r* as well as those with pre-vocalic *r*: cf. (*þœr*), **tiguR* > **leguR* > *-lǫgr* 'thirty years old' with the proper name

⁸ The falling together of the primary *ē* in class I with the secondary *e* in class II accounts for the fact that the *u* in the end syllable of *serun* did not cause the primary *u*-umlaut of *e* > *i* (*serun* > **sirun* like **seðuR* > *siðr*), but labialized the *e* > *ǫ* after the pattern of the *u*-umlaut of secondary *e*. Here the secondary *u*-umlaut had fallen together with the *w*-umlaut, which was likewise of secondary origin (cf. **sinkwan* 'to sink' [Goth. *siggan*] > **sekkwa* > *sǫkkva* with *serun* > *sǫrun*).

⁹ Cf. §77, 3: "*e* > *ǫ* (*geschlossen*) tritt nur dann ein, wenn *e* . . . nicht gebrochen werden konnte, also nach *r* wie in 3. pl. prät. ind. *rǫro* (auch *rero* nach sg. *rera*, wie umgekehrt sg. *rǫra* nach dem pl.) ruderten . . ."

(Hall)-*friðuR> *freðuR> -frþðr; *sþrun* corresponds to -lþgr, and *rþrun* to -frþðr. This is evidence that the *þ* in *sþrun* was not borrowed from *rþrun*, but was due to the *u*-umlaut of *e*> *þ* as in -lþgr, and that the labializing by the pre-vocalic *r* in *rþrun* was a secondary factor which coalesced with *u*-umlaut as in -frþðr. The labialization through pre-vocalic *r* as the fundamental, differential element between class I and class II may be eliminated as not supported by the evidence.

The essential element which differentiated the two classes was the preservation and loss of the reduplicating prefix. Why the prefix was preserved in class I and lost in class II is another question and does not concern us in the phonetic analysis. But it is certain that the preservation of the reduplicating prefix is an archaism inherited (as in Gothic) from Proto-Germanic, and therefore it is reasonable to assume that the prefix retained its original function as a designation for the perfect-preterit tense after it had become the stem syllable in ON. This resulted in a dual function of the vowel *e* in class I, where the prefix was preserved: (1) as representing the prefix vowel (Goth. *ai*), and (2) as functioning as the stem vowel of the preterit tense, as in class II (cf. *se-run* [Goth. *sat-sōun*] and *s-e-run* like *f-e-llun*). As reflecting the prefix vowel, the vowel *e* in *se-run* could be labialized to *þ* without disturbing the tense function of the prefix. Since in *fellun* the prefix was lost, the *e* did not reflect the prefix vowel and hence remained unaltered in conformity with the sg. paradigm (*fell:fellun*). Since the forms *serun* and *fellun* were on the same phonetic level, there seems to be no other way to explain the divergence between *sþrun* and *fellun* than to assume that the labialization in *serun*> *sþrun* reflected a suprasegmental (prosodic) element of the vowel *e* in the reduplicating prefix (*se*-> *sþ*-), otherwise only the non-labialized forms (*serun:rerun*) would have occurred. These forms represent the primary pattern, as in class II, with the vowel *e* transferred from the sg. paradigm. When the secondary pattern with labialization of *e*> *þ* developed in class I, it represented a subcategory (*serun*> *sþrun*, *rerun*> *rþrun*), which accounts for the sporadic occurrence of the labialized forms and the retention of the non-labialized forms, and is in keeping with the secondary, suprasegmental element of the prefix vowel *e* as a designation for the preterit tense.

TÓK ÞESSUM VIÐ HRINGNUM

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NRA 52 is one of the oldest manuscripts preserved in Icelandic. It consists of six fragments of the "Oldest Saga of Saint Olaf" which are usually dated in the first half of the thirteenth century. Noreen sets the date at about 1200, while Gustav Storm, who edited the fragments, considers them somewhat later, and Seip concurs with the latter.¹ These fragments are, of course, of considerable interest for the student of early Scandinavian literature, and they have usually received attention with an emphasis on the literary point of view. The fragments, however, are also of interest from the linguistic point of view, since they represent a stage of the language which is early, at least with respect to what is preserved in prose.

At one point in the fragments we find an interesting passage (in normalized form): . . . *ok þá er Þormóðr tók þessum við hringnum, þá kvað hann visu þessa* 'and when Þormóðr received this ring, then he spoke this verse' (text, p. 5, line 3). I scarcely need point out that the word order in the passage quoted appears to be most unusual, with a preposition seeming to come between a demonstrative and the noun with which it goes. Storm in his text actually prints the passage in the expected order (with *við* before *þessum*) and makes no note of the transposition here. In the Introduction (p. 4), however, he mentions this among other "corrections of inaccuracies" in earlier editions and says that a transposition mark had not been noted previously. That is, Storm assumes a scribal error here which was corrected by the scribe himself. Storm's edition includes facsimiles of the fragments, and although facsimiles, at least those made before the development of modern techniques, are usually not as good as the original, these particular reproductions seem to be quite clear.

As far as I can determine, there is a single dot over the *þ* of *þessum*, and there may be a very faint small mark of some kind over the *v* of

¹ Adolf Noreen, *Altisländische und altnorwegische Grammatik*, 4th ed. (Halle, 1923), p. 11. Gustav Storm, *Otte brudstykker af den ældste saga om Olav den hellige*, Det norske historiskeildeskiftfond, No. 25 (Oslo, 1893), Introduction pp. 7-8. Didrik Arup Seip, *Palæografi B: Norge og Island*, Nordisk kultur, Vol. XXVIII B (Stockholm, 1954), p. 85. All references to the text of NRA 52 will be to Storm's edition.

við. According to Seip, the scribes used a number of different devices to indicate transposition.² For Icelandic manuscripts he lists the following: the letters *a*, *b*, etc.; two dots or two accents; a comma; an accent with one or two dots below it; or three commas. For Norwegian manuscripts, in addition to some of those listed for Icelandic, there were also used three dots or two parallel horizontal strokes. None of these seem to fit the situation in the passage under consideration. Furthermore, Storm remarks elsewhere in the Introduction (p. 8) that the manuscript is carefully written, with almost no errors except for the loss of one line in a skaldic verse and the frequent omission of the accent (this can hardly be counted an error, in view of the widely varying usage of the accent in the manuscripts). To assume a rare mark of transposition here is rather *ad hoc* procedure. Of course, it is quite understandable, since the word order as it stands appears to be extremely unusual, if not unique. An alternative solution would be to consider the passage a scribal error which was not corrected by the scribe and simply emend the text. But is it possible to find another explanation, one simpler and more satisfactory? There are three points which I would like to consider in treating this problem: 1) the general methodological approach, 2) the passage as it actually stands, and 3) comparable grammatical situations in other Old Icelandic manuscripts from about the same period.

In older scholarship it was common procedure to undertake textual emendations, even extensive ones, and assume scribal error almost at will. Later scholarship has tended to become more cautious about invoking scribal error and emending the text, and rightly so. Scribes obviously did make mistakes of various kinds, and, to a certain extent, we have a vantage point—a mass of historical material which was not at their disposal. However, we must not forget that we today can never have the same feeling for the language, or even quite the same knowledge of it, that even the lowliest scribe possessed as a native speaker. Thus we must use extreme caution in assuming errors in the text as it is preserved. All other possible explanations must be exhaustively investigated first. I think that the passage here is an excellent case in point: it seems to beg for emendation, but there is another solution which is preferable.

² Seip, pp. 34, 63, 83, 104, and 146.

The passage as it stands is interesting as a sort of linguistic curiosity. Even if, ultimately, one should decide that there is a mark of transposition in the manuscript—and perhaps this possibility can never be ruled out absolutely—one wonders how the scribe could have made such an error. Many typical scribal errors, such as haplology, for example, have a reasonable explanation. Is the example under consideration merely gross carelessness? Storm's note on the care which the manuscript otherwise shows would seem to deny this possibility. Or is there an explanation which may be found in the general grammar of the language? The answer to this question will actually be the same as the one I will propose under the assumption that the text is correct as it stands.

My first premise, then, is that the text does not contain an error, whether corrected by the scribe or not. My second is now that this situation could not have happened with just any verb plus preposition plus prepositional object group. I feel strongly that it is no coincidence, no mere chance, that the verb here is *taka*. Precisely the verb *taka* is one of those in Icelandic which shows a wide variety of possible constructions, and to convince oneself of this, one need only look into either of the large dictionaries of Fritzner or Cleasby-Vigfusson.³

Ignoring, for the moment, the large variety of possible meanings of the various constructions which *taka* admits, let us consider what actually occurs as regards the form of the expressions. The verb *taka* may take an accusative direct object. It may be joined with various prepositional phrases or adverbs, or it may take a dative object without any preposition, a phenomenon not uncommon with some other Icelandic verbs. To judge from the dictionaries, the combination of *taka* with *við* (as in our passage) was quite frequent. If, then, *taka* could be followed by an accusative, a dative, or a prepositional phrase, here specifically *við*, the stage is set for a mixing of constructions. Such a mixing would be facilitated by the fact that *taka við* usually means something like 'to receive,' while *taka* with a dative can mean about the same. Cleasby-Vigfusson, in fact, suggests that the latter construction is simply elliptical for the former. Whether this is actually correct or not does not concern us here, but it demonstrates the close semantic relationship of the two constructions. Thus it is not too diffi-

³ Johan Fritzner, *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (Oslo, 1954). Richard Cleasby and Gudbrand Vigfusson, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1957).

cult to imagine that one might begin a sentence using the one construction and then switch in the middle to the other. This is a linguistic phenomenon, a type of mild anacoluthon, not without parallel. I would analyze the passage in this manner: . . . *ok þá er Þormóðr tók þessum—við hringnum* . . . 'and when Þormóðr received this—the ring (that is)' and so on. No emendation is necessary. This interpretation is obviously the simplest and most preferable of those considered.⁴

Now that a possible solution has been advanced, its validity still requires being tested. Thus far I have relied upon the dictionaries for information about the constructions into which *taka* enters. Although this evidence is sufficient to confirm certain initial assumptions, it is not without its weaknesses. This is especially true since the material under consideration comes from one of the earliest texts. The dictionaries tell what constructions are found in Old Icelandic in general, but it is possible, and even likely, that at this or that particular period within Old Icelandic not all of the possible constructions were in use. Some may be old ones in the process of dying out, while others may be new idioms just developing. We might now wonder, for example, whether all three types of constructions mentioned earlier for *taka* occur in other manuscripts from about the same period as NRA 52. I have therefore investigated a number of the manuscripts from the period 1150–1250 and analyzed all of the occurrences of *taka* in each of them.⁵ It might, of course, be that all three constructions occur from the very beginning, since our manuscript tradition starts relatively late. But it will be interesting to see what the other manuscripts reveal about the general situation, and if any development can be traced. The results will not only concern the basic problem of the investigation, but will also present a brief diachronic sketch of the verb *taka* for this period.

In the table are listed the various manuscripts which I have investigated; they are arranged in a roughly chronological order.⁶ The column marked "acc." gives the number of occurrences of *taka* with an accusative direct object; "dat."—the occurrences with a dative ob-

⁴ The suggestion of a possible contamination of constructions here was made to me several years ago by Professor Håkon Hamre of the University of California, Berkeley.

⁵ Those texts were selected which were available to me in facsimile or diplomatic editions or for which I have photographs of the manuscript. For editions see Noreen, pp. 10–12.

⁶ In this I have mainly followed Seip, pp. 41–43 and 85.

MS.	acc.	dat.	c.u.	við	prep/adv. misc.	total
AM237a	1		1			2
AM315d	2		2		1	5
RM I					1	1
Gks1812	13		3	10	2	28
AM673b	2		2		5	9
AM674a	10		5	3	10	28
Holm 15	150		108	27	65	350
AM655 VII-VIII	4				4	8
AM673a	4		1			5
AM655 III	4		6	2	2	14
AM655 IV	2		2		7	11
AM655 V	4		2	1	13	20
RM II	1					1
AM279a			1			1
AM645	63	1	67	16	68	215
AM315c	2		1		2	5
NRA52	6	1*	1	(1*)+2	3	13
						<hr/> 716

* The occurrence under consideration.

ject; "c.u."—those occurrences where the case was morphologically uncertain; and "við"—the occurrences of *taka* with *við* (with or without an expressed object). In assigning a particular occurrence to the category "c.u." I have tried to judge very strictly. If there seemed to be the slightest possibility of doubt, I have listed the occurrence as uncertain. The result probably is that a number of accusatives have been marked as uncertain, but of course this does not materially affect my conclusions, since I am most interested in occurrences of the dative. In this matter I have consulted Larsson for those texts which he used.⁷ Although I frequently disagree with him as to the certainty of the case of a particular form, his work was extremely helpful. The column marked "prep/adv-misc." indicates the number of occurrences which in one way or another do not fit into any of the first four: for example, those examples where *taka* was followed simply by a prepositional phrase (other than *við*), or else the verb was used reflexively (where the object of the non-reflexive construction would become the subject and therefore nominative). Thus, our primary interest lies in the first four columns.

⁷ Ludvig Larsson, *Ordförrådet i de äldsta isländska handskrifterna* (Lund, 1891).

The infrequency of *taka* with a dative is at once striking. Although some of the manuscripts are quite short and the number of occurrences of *taka* consequently rather limited, there is a total of 716 in all, and longer texts are distributed throughout. Any of the examples which are morphologically ambiguous could theoretically be datives, but this is a point upon which not too much weight may be placed, obviously, and it is significant that in Holm 15 with a total of 350 occurrences for *taka* there is not one clear example of a dative object. The one example from AM 645 is thus of importance; in normalized form it reads: . . . *hverstu vel Clemens hafði hans málum tekið í Rómaborg*.⁸ Here there is an unambiguous example of *taka* with a dative object. This confirms the possibility of analyzing the passage in NRA 52 as I have done—as a mixture of constructions, where the scribe began by using *taka* with a dative object but then switched to the prepositional phrase with *við*. Thus it is unnecessary to assume a scribal error of any type, whether corrected by the scribe himself or not.

One final point of historical interest may be suggested by the table in connection with the use of *taka* with a dative object. As it happens, all of the oldest texts investigated here are prose, except for AM 673b (the *Pláttúsdrápa*) and the few skaldic verses in NRA 52 itself. A glance at Egilsson's *Lexicon Poeticum*⁹ shows several examples of *taka* with a dative (in the sense of 'to receive something'): one from Sigvatr Þórðarson (first half of the eleventh century) and one from Einarr Skúlason (first half of the twelfth century or a trifle later), both antedating the texts under consideration (AM 645 and NRA 52).¹⁰ To judge from the table, prose usage was originally *taka við*, since it is probably merely coincidence due to the very limited scope of the first three texts that this expression is not also found in them as well. I would suggest that *taka* with a dative was originally poetic usage which was later taken over into prose. It might also be noted that the use of *taka* with a dative object then continues down to the present day in Icelandic.¹¹

⁸ *Ísländska handskriften no. 645 4to: I. handskriftens äldre del*, ed. Ludvig Larsson (Lund, 1885), p. 43, lines 16–17.

⁹ Sveinbjörn Egilsson, *Lexicon poeticum antiquæ linguæ septentrionalis: Ordbog over det norsk-islandske skjaldesprog*, 2nd ed. (Copenhagen, 1931).

¹⁰ Finnur Jónsson, *Den oldnorske og oldislandske litteraturs historie*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen, 1894–1901), I, 590–612, and II, 62–73.

¹¹ Sigfús Blöndal, *Íslensk-dönsk orðabók* (Reykjavík, 1920–1924).

REVIEWS

Mitchell, P. M. *A History of Danish Literature*. With an Introductory Chapter by Mogens Haugsted. The American-Scandinavian Foundation, New York, 1958. Pp. 322. \$6.

The first attempt by a native American to write a scholarly history of all Danish literature, Mitchell's book is a work of substance, sound scholarship, and, generally, good judgment.

The author of a history of literature has a choice of several methods: biographical-psychological or impressionistic-interpretive, though both of these methods are now rather out of fashion; or ideological-intellectual, stressing the history of ideas; or socio-economic; or æsthetic-analytical. Frequently, he will resort to an eclecticism that allows his interpretation to rest on a broad, though not necessarily firm, basis.

Mitchell has chosen "to combine cultural history with critical interpretation." His purpose is, he says, "to synthesize an historical presentation with the evaluation of single works which, because of their ethos and literary form, stand as contributions to the enrichment of human experience. . . ." This approach is essentially a combination of the ideological and the æsthetic approaches, accenting, perhaps in effect more than by intent, ethos rather than æsthetics. By largely disregarding the framework of economic, political, and national history within which literature is shaped, Mitchell has managed to keep his book within bounds but has also deprived his readers of certain vantage points from which the literary landscape could have been seen in various perspectives.

Well aware that "there is something artificial about limiting one's view to the literature of a single country or a single language," Mitchell considers Danish literature against a general European background. In doing this he has doubtless learned from his adviser, Professor Billeskov Jansen of the University of Copenhagen, who in *Danmarks Diglekunst* applied the method of the comparative study of literature to the interpretation of the literature of a single country, discussed in terms of literary genres.

Mitchell has wisely concentrated on "living literature," limiting his presentation chiefly to authors and titles he considers historically representative or currently significant. On the whole, his selections seem reasonable, but in such matters unanimity of consent is not to be expected; this reviewer would not have excluded writers like Svend Lange, Otto Rung, Agnes Henningsen, Harry Spiberg, and Kai Hoffmann. Since the book is directed to an Anglo-American public, the availability of English translations (usually cited in bibliographically good form in footnotes) is also considered and such outstanding writers as Holberg, Hans Christian Andersen and Kierkegaard, who are part of world literature, together with Grundtvig, J. P. Jacobsen, Johannes V. Jensen, and others whose foreign reputation is gaining, are naturally given special emphasis. Enough important writers have been included, however, to fulfill the author's hope that his book will demonstrate that Danish literature has treasures in addition to those contributed by the stellar performers.

The introductory chapter, contributed by Mogens Haugsted of the Royal Library in Copenhagen, gives a precise presentation of Danish literature during ancient and early medieval times: runic inscriptions, heroic poetry, Saxo Grammaticus, and early

Christian writings. The author points out that the coming of Christianity to Denmark led to the replacement rather than the enrichment of native culture, so that, as Mitchell shows in the following three chapters, Danish literature—except for the ballads and folklore—had little independent national existence until the eighteenth century.

In Chapter II, dealing with the late Middle Ages, Mitchell gives a clear presentation of the Danish ballads (which constitute one of the finest developments of European balladry) followed by some eight pages of quotations from ballads which, however, do little but relate contents.

"Humanism, Reformation, and Renaissance" treats of Bible translations, hymn writing (aesthetically "the greatest accomplishment in Danish literature in both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries"), chapbooks, the beginning drama, and Arrebo's "great poetic effort," the *Hexæmeron*. One notes with interest Mitchell's demonstration of the spread and the nature of printed literature in the sixteenth century, based on a bibliographical study by Laurits Nielsen, hidden away in an article in *Nordisk tidsskrift for bok- och biblioteksväsen*, and supplemented by studies by Mitchell himself.

In "An Age of Dualism. Baroque Literature", Dr. Mitchell considers the greatest names of the period: Thomas Kingo, the hymn writer, "in whom Danish baroque poetry reached its zenith," and the Dano-Norwegian Petter Dass, whose *Nordlands Trompet* might have been more fully treated. Special attention is fortunately paid to Leonora Christina Ulfeldt's *Jammersminde*, which—although not a "conscious literary product"—is doubtless a milestone in the development of Danish prose. Mitchell's flair for bibliography pays dividends again in this chapter. He has found in Peder Syv's *Nogle Betænkninger om det cimbriske Sprog* (1663) a very interesting survey of the state of literature in the seventeenth century, and he produces evidence of the popularity of the French and English pastoral and didactic novels by an examination of catalogs of books sold at the end of the seventeenth century.

"The Enlightenment" considers the beginning of a national Danish-Norwegian literature. The period has two great writers, Ludwig Holberg at the beginning of the eighteenth century and Johannes Ewald at the end. Holberg obviously is a writer to Mitchell's liking (he has translated some of Holberg's essays), and he writes perceptively about him (p. 81):

Holberg liked to think of himself as a moralist and boasted that nearly all of his plays were didactic. The didactic content lies rather in Holberg's intent and in his retrospective epilogues, however, than within the plays themselves. Well-constructed, witty, and pointed, the comedies are absorbing and amusing but—fortunately—fail to convey Holberg's avowed lesson. On the other hand they are really didactic insofar as they hold various human weaknesses and follies up to ridicule.

Ewald, the great poet, though perhaps of less immediate appeal to Mitchell, is well characterized and his poems are considered in relation to the general nature of eighteenth-century European poetry. One would have liked, though, to have had more attention given to Ewald's autobiographical *Levnet og Meninger*, one of the high points in Danish prose.

"Golden Age" is dominated by the leading romantic poet, Oehlenschläger, with brief treatments of such contemporaries as Ingemann, Hauch, Winther (whose *Til Een*, the cycle of poems which Professor Vilhelm Andersen has called "the main work in Danish love poetry," might have been specifically mentioned), Poul Martin Møller,

and Steen Steensen Blicher who, according to Mitchell, neither contradicted the times nor was one with the times, and could be called either a romantic or a realist.

Chapter VII is devoted to N. F. S. Grundtvig, "a gigantic and unwieldy figure in . . . Danish literature . . . theology, history, politics, and education," of whose catalytic qualities Mitchell gives a good account, making us understand why Grundtvig for decades "has been a dividing line in Danish intellectual life."

In "Aesthetic Irony," we meet Grundtvig's opposite, the arbiter of taste, Heiberg, and the now world-famous Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard, of course, dwarfed Heiberg, but Mitchell feels that although "it may seem a far cry from the light vaudeville of Johan Ludvig Heiberg to the profundity of Kierkegaard's writings, . . . seen from the standpoint of both philosophical and literary history, Heiberg and Kierkegaard had common roots." Mitchell's eight-page treatment of Kierkegaard is illuminating as far as it goes but, of course, can only skim the surface. His own attitude to Kierkegaard is suggested in the remark: "He, himself, is perhaps 'a stage on life's way' that must be overcome in the progress of the human spirit."

In the chapter on Hans Christian Andersen, Mitchell, of course, pays most attention to Andersen's tales and gives a good demonstration of their style and technique. He takes pains to point out to American and English readers that the tales are not primarily written for children and that they usually "have a double meaning which only the adult perceives." He shows that although the tales constitute Andersen's greatest contribution to literature, his novels, plays, and travel books (and he might have added: poems)—all of which are virtually unknown to foreigners—must be considered in drawing an accurate picture of him.

In "Bourgeois Eclecticism," Mitchell writes very appreciatively about Frederik Paludan-Müller, "almost unknown outside Scandinavia," whose satirical epic poem, *Adam Homo*, Mitchell feels "is deserving of a place among the monuments of . . . world literature." Two highly gifted lyric poets, Emil Aarestrup and Ludvig Bødtker, are less satisfactorily treated, while the modest poet, Vilhelm Kaalund, gets the undeserved honor of being "put in the same category" as the two gifted ones. If Danish literature in the fifties and sixties seems rather static, the Norwegian literature of that period, published mainly in Copenhagen, was, Mitchell points out, vital and provocative. As a consequence, it helped give momentum to the literary movement that came to Denmark in the seventies.

"The 'Breakthrough,'" deals with this new movement growing out of the ardent activities of Georg Brandes (reported rather coolly by Mitchell) which made "naturalism and the new socio-psychological view of literature" take hold in Denmark. Of the writers identified with the "Breakthrough," J. P. Jacobsen naturally receives the fullest treatment, including an examination of his prose style. Drachmann's outstanding metrical achievements are ignored, while Herman Bang's technique is interestingly described, though curiously termed expressionistic rather than impressionistic. Henrik Pontoppidan, in whom Mitchell feels "the 'Breakthrough' found its critic and chronicler," is given full and appreciative treatment; one wonders, though, whether he can be rightly called a "philosophical optimist."

In Chapter XII, with its dubious title, "The Road to Materialism," quite a variety of authors passes in review. First, the lyricists of the nineties reacting against the realism of the eighties: Viggo Stuckenborg, Johannes Jørgensen, Sophus Claussen; then

Helge Rode, also a typical writer of the nineties; next, the "conservatives," Jakob Knudsen, Valdemar Rørdam, and Thorkild Gravlund; furthermore, the Jutlander Jeppe Aakjaer, "in whom regional literature became one with the literature of social consciousness," and "the leading figure of literature of the Left in Denmark," Martin Andersen Nexø; then, Johannes V. Jensen, who, in Mitchell's presentation, plays the role of the great materialist; and two eminent lyric poets, Ludvig Holstein (several times rather constrictively referred to as Johannes V. Jensen's disciple) and Thøger Larsen, neither of whom is quite given his due, followed by Gustav Wied, who perhaps receives more than his due; and, among others, Harald Kidde, "an introspective, pious, and tender writer," who "contrasted positive with negative attitudes." Certainly the road of materialism is not a straight one, and the reader wonders whether, in reality, it did lead to materialism. Many of the stimuli and responses that drew writers in various directions during the period are, however, interestingly accounted for. Mitchell has been unduly criticized for making too much of Harald Nielsen's reaction against Brandes and his followers; certainly, the opposition to Brandes, whether rational or not, was strong and was brought to focus by Nielsen. It does seem, though, that Mitchell has overplayed ideological factors and has not always penetrated surfaces. It is particularly regrettable that he has failed to convey Johannes V. Jensen's tremendous vitality, poetic intuition, and linguistic mastery, which made him the greatest force in twentieth-century Danish literature. Jensen's prose, which has given a new tone to the Danish language, would have been worthy of special analysis. The presentation of the period covered in this chapter would have benefited by being seen in relation to the economic, social, and cultural efforts to gain internally what had been lost externally through the military defeat Denmark had suffered in 1864.

The "Disillusioned Generation" has been considered, it must be stated, in relation to the times—World War I. Tom Kristensen, outstanding poet, novelist, and critic, is seen as the leading representative of intellectual revolt, and Jørgen Paludan, eminent novelist and, like Kristensen, also a critic, as his counterpole. Nis Petersen, whom Mitchell calls an "unpolished humanist," is perhaps rightly given a less dominant position than usually assigned by Danish critics. The important writers, Paul la Cour, and Martin A. Hansen, are introduced in this chapter but given fuller treatment in later ones. Among the many social novels of the period, Hans Kirk's *Fiskerne* deservedly receives emphasis.

In "Art vs. the Social Conscience," the emphasis is on "the three dramatists who gave new life to the Danish stage," Kaj Munk, a vital "traditionalist;" Kjeld Abell, a subtle "experimentalist;" Soya, a "satirical observer;" on the writer of psychological novels, H. C. Branner, whose absorbing though controversial novel, *Ingen kender Natten*, Mitchell treats with noncommittal reserve; and on the unclassifiable Karen Blixen, with whose sophisticated writing Mitchell wrestles valiantly, leaving it to "the literary historian a few decades hence" to determine her final position in Danish letters.

The concluding chapter, "A Need for Myth," is one of the best and probably the most independent one in the book. Supporting his presentation in large measure with a careful examination of the leading literary and cultural journals of the day, Mitchell ably charts the course of literature during a time when young writers under the impact of the German occupation searched for new directions with an anti-rationalistic bias. Three established writers, Martin A. Hansen, who had turned away from the social

novel, Paul la Cour, who in his *Fragmenter af en Dagbog* had set forth a new, almost bodiless poetics, and Vilhelm Grønbech, whose subjective philosophy had leanings toward mysticism, gave impetus to some of the writings of the young authors associated with the periodical, *Heretica*. Among these were Ole Wivel, Thorkild Bjørnvig, Ove Abildgaard, Frank Jæger and (off and on) Erik Knudsen, all of whom contributed to a new lyric poetry of largely untraditional character. To this group of writers might have been added Ole Sarvig and, to the opposing group gathered around the left-wing periodicals, *Athenæum* and *Dialog* (also examined by Mitchell), Jørgen Nash, who combined socialistic views with lyric vitalism.

Mitchell's book is a substantial contribution to literary history. Widely read in Danish literature, evidently familiar with the results of Danish literary research, and in possession of basically sound literary judgment, Mitchell offers American and English readers a good guide to Danish literature. His book does not, of course, present strikingly new points of view; but neither does it merely reflect the findings of others. Mitchell usually forms his own opinions on the writers with whom he deals. One can, naturally, find it necessary to take exception to statements by Mitchell, but one must admit that he has his feet on the ground. In the later chapters, especially, Mitchell has a tendency to define the writers too much in terms of the Right, the Left, and the Center. A lack of artistic verve is sometimes felt, and even his intelligent discussion of some of Denmark's foremost writers (particularly the lyric poets) does not always succeed in transferring to the readers the very essence of the qualities he has described—but such a transfer is, of course, always difficult to achieve when writing about a foreign literature.

If these shortcomings can be chiefly ascribed to the fact that the author is not a native Dane, with Danish literature, so to speak, in his blood—and must in his demonstrations deal with artistic prose and poetry in translation—the reverse of the picture should also be noted. Precisely because Mitchell has had to come to Danish literature from the outside, he takes nothing for granted, must consistently be on the alert, observe, compare, explain—to himself and to his readers. He can, therefore, in the real sense of the word, introduce American readers to Danish literature a bit more prosaically perhaps but also more carefully and cautiously than would a Danish scholar of the same caliber as Mitchell—who might well now and then get out of step with his readers.

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Wahlgren, Erik. *The Kensington Stone, A Mystery Solved*. The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1958. Pp. xiv+228, +33 illustrations. \$5.

Half a century ago a flat slab of stone was uncovered on the farm of a Swedish immigrant, Olof Ohman (Swedish Öhman), in the neighborhood of Kensington in Douglas County, Minnesota. Destined to become a seed of undeserved dissension, the stone was carved with a strange inscription which turned out to consist of graphic symbols similar to the Old Scandinavian runes. After the inscription had been examined by some American and Scandinavian linguists and found to be a modern fraud, little or nothing was heard about the stone for some years until a Norwegian-American writer, Hjalmar R. Holand, acquired it (for \$25?) from Ohman in 1907. Since then

Holand has devoted enormous time and energy to attempts at proving the authenticity of the inscription, which has become known as the "Kensington Stone."

The inscription, which claims to have been carved in 1362, tells a story about the bloody killing of ten out of thirty Scandinavians who had penetrated from Vinland, the medieval designation of an eastern region of America discovered by Norsemen shortly after the year 1000, into the heart of Minnesota. Some of the symbols in this inscription are identical with or similar to Scandinavian runes while others are unique.

Had Holand never learned about this stone, it would probably have been buried in oblivion, which is the proper place for this fraud or hoax or joke or whatever it can be called. But Holand conceived the idea that the inscription was genuine and conveyed a message of immense value for the pre-Columbian history of America. Holand's publications in defence of the stone as an historical document teemed with fundamental errors and inaccuracies of every kind, but the nature of the issue, coupled with Holand's shrewd power of presentation, was such as to capture the public's imagination and to arouse considerable interest among laymen and romantically inclined Scandinavian immigrants in the Middle West. The "rune stone" even fooled some scholars in fields other than Scandinavian linguistics and runology. On the other hand, the runologists and experts on Scandinavian philology unanimously denounced the inscription as a hoax. But this opposition from authorities, which normally would have silenced the most stubborn crusader, did not discourage Holand. Why? We shall see. Holand continued his fight against the compact wall of experts, now and then publicly supported by enthusiastic followers who, like Holand, had no scholarly knowledge of Old Scandinavian. His method was simple. He ignored such adverse criticism as he could not refute; he twisted and distorted facts as well as statements of others, and he created a series of myths founded on groundless speculations, ignorance of elementary Scandinavian linguistics, and an unchecked imagination.

Even if the so-called Kensington Stone had not been proved to be a fake before the appearance of Wahlgren's book, this excellent exposure of amateurish and unethical methods under the guise of idealistic purposes meets a pressing need in exposing, definitely and conclusively, Holand's "theories" and assertions. Several problems connected with the stone needed an unbiased and exhaustive investigation, e.g. the identification of its carver, the circumstances under which the stone was found, and the reason for Holand's interest in it. Everyone who prefers scholarly demonstration to amateurish speculation and prejudiced argumentation will consider Wahlgren's book the final word on the Kensington Stone.

The amount of research upon which Wahlgren's book is based is of Herculean proportions. The author has not only investigated all pertinent literature but undertaken time-consuming detective work in archives, institutional and private libraries, and he has been able to discover new material which Holand has kept from public knowledge because it is devastating to his myths and the credibility of his statements. Wahlgren has explored in detail the locality of the find and checked the veracity of statements of the persons involved. The results are most interesting. One might imagine that an investigation of this nature could be of little interest to persons not directly interested in the problems, but Wahlgren has created a book which is more revealing and thrilling than most mystery stories. Furthermore, it is written and composed in a manner worthy of admiration and imitation.

In the first chapters Wahlgren gives an account of the history of the stone and the ensuing pro and con discussion as to its authenticity. It is illuminating to see that not a single one of Holand's supporters has any considerable familiarity with Scandinavian philology in general and runology in particular. But every authority in Scandinavian linguistics has condemned the stone. This does not prevent Holand, who does not respect facts, from repeating, time and time again, the false statement that experts have found the "rune stone" genuine.

The stone was discovered under the root of a tree on Ohman's farm, but great uncertainty attaches to the important question of the age and the size of the tree. No one has even seen the tree. Furthermore, reports about the date of the discovery of the stone differ, varying from the summer of 1898 to just before New Year's Day 1899. Here was a whole field open to Holand's myth-making. He introduced several testimonies and incompletely attested affidavits, all produced at least a decade after the stone was uncovered. Holand changed his statements from time to time and on occasion withheld important facts. Patient searching and acute discernment amid a jungle of inconsistent and contradictory information has enabled Wahlgren to expose Holand's mistakes, inaccuracies, tampering with facts, and disregard of pertinent evidence. Through some ingenious demonstration Wahlgren shows that the inscribed stone in all probability was dug up some time between August and November 1898 and, dramatically, suggests that the stone might have been dug up twice, the first time without inscription, whereafter it was carved, buried again, and "accidentally" found a second time.

One would think that geologists should be able to establish whether a carving on a slab of stone was made in the middle of the fourteenth century or at the end of the nineteenth. No, not in this case. Everything is mysterious about this stone. The reports on mineralogical and petrological analyses undertaken by geological experts are greatly at variance. This is strange since the runes have fresh, sharp edges and are as distinct as if they had been carved a very short time ago. After an examination and evaluation of the reports issued by twelve different observers Wahlgren concludes: "Their joint testimony is that no great antiquity need be posited for the inscription on anything approaching geological grounds."

Wahlgren also examines briefly Holand's historical speculations. Without any evidence, Holand states as a fact that a Norwegian expedition was sent by the king of Norway and Sweden, Magnus Smek, to Greenland in 1355, that this expedition proceeded to America, penetrated into the heart of Minnesota, where ten members were cruelly killed, carved the Kensington Stone, and eventually returned to Norway in 1364. Wahlgren exposes Holand's wild fantasies in a most revealing chapter entitled *Some Historical and Geographical Details*. This demonstration of Holand's speculations and unproved hypotheses should convince even the most ardent supporters of the Kensington Stone that Holand's amateurish historical methodology has resulted in sheer absurdities. This reviewer has recently showed,¹ too late to be considered by Wahlgren, that in 1355 no ships sailed from Norway to Iceland, much less to Greenland, because of adverse weather conditions. The next year conditions in Norway had changed greatly and Magnus was no longer on the throne but engaged in combat with his son who succeeded him. The prerequisite conditions for an expedition to Greenland no longer existed.

¹ *The Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 9 (1958), pp. 3 ff.

If this chapter is not enough to dampen the enthusiasm of Holand's followers, the following chapter should do the work. It deals with Holand as investigator, and here Wahlgren gives ample tangible proofs of Holand's unbelievable ignorance of fundamental elements in philology and linguistics, his inability to deal accurately with sources and criticism, and his complete lack of respect for facts, evidence, and authorities. Everything that does not speak in favor of the Kensington Stone Holand disregards, arrogantly dismisses as unfounded, reduces to "little things," or twists to suit his purposes. His unethical methods have no place in a scholarly discussion.

A peculiar light is thrown upon Holand's fanatic interest in the artifact so pretentiously designed as a "rune stone," when Wahlgren discloses that Holand has had, and perhaps still has, financial interests in the stone. He has more than once tried to sell it for considerable sums of money. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

The many errors, false combinations and myths on which Holand bases his "analyses" of the runic symbols and the language of the inscription are gathered in another chapter. Most of this material has been set forth by others, but Wahlgren has partly summarized and partly given original demonstrations and thus has created an overwhelming impression of the magnitude of Holand's absurdities.

Holand has tried to portray Ohman as an ignorant farmer who could not possibly have carved the inscription he uncovered on his farm. Furthermore, Holand has stated that Ohman owned no antiquarian books that could shed light upon the inscription. Recently, after it was discovered that Ohman had in his possession a book by Carl Rosander, *Den kunskapsrike skolmästaren* (*The Well-Informed Schoolmaster*), Holand bluntly declared that the book could have been of no help in inditing the inscription. Now it is revealed that Ohman was an intelligent man who had strong interests in the Orient and a theosophical leaning. Wahlgren has examined Rosander's book, and the result is remarkable, to say the least. The edition in Ohman's possession was of 1881-82, and the flyleaf bears Ohman's signature dated Kensington, March 2, 1891, seven years before the stone was unearthed. The pages 61-64 are worn by fingermarks, and these are the pages that contain information on runes and the history of the Swedish language! Wahlgren's comparison between the presentation in Rosander's book on the one hand and the runic symbols and the language of the inscription on the other are strikingly revealing. Some of the most remarkable peculiarities in the inscription can clearly be traced to the Rosander volume or to books that were widely distributed in the 1890's. No wonder that Holand, who knew right along that Ohman owned an edition of Rosander, first passed over it with silence and later, when its existence became known, dismissed it with a shrug. If he had disclosed the pertinent contents of this volume, he would have dealt a death-blow to his own "theories." As was pointed out above, such evidence is consistently excluded from Holand's own argumentation.

Practically every feature in the inscription save one can be explained on the basis of either the Rosander book, of widely spread literature of the 90's, of Ohman's unfamiliarity with runes and medieval Swedish, or of his native dialect of Hälsingland in northern Sweden. That one feature is comprised of the three capital letters (not runes!) *AVM*, which are generally taken to be the common abbreviation of *Ave Maria* or *Ave Virgo Maria*. But there is another possibility. A scrapbook that belonged to Ohman has been discovered. Wahlgren finds that one of the newspaper clippings in this book contains a paragraph on Buddha which concludes with *AUM* in capitals.

These three letters represent the sacred Sanscrit formula *OM*, a word of power, used in Hindu prayers and religious rituals. Ohman was interested in Buddhism, which is described on a page in Rosander's book. Wahlgren is probably right in preferring the interpretation of *AVM* ($V=U$) in the Kensington inscription as the Sanscrit word to the abbreviated Latin salutation, especially since there are no punctuation marks between the letters while all other words in the inscription are separated by double points. However, Wahlgren does not deny the possibility that the rune carver might have had both formulas in mind.

Wahlgren also shows that at least two local versions of the inscription existed from the very beginning, one of which was carved on the stone, and another in the form of a handwritten sketch made by, or at least in the possession of, a neighbor of Ohman's. This sketch differs from the inscription at eighteen points. The sketch was, of course, never mentioned by Holand in his many publications on the stone until it was published by others. Since its existence was of disastrous consequence for Holand's myths, he had dismissed it, following his usual custom, as not being worth any consideration. Wahlgren comments: "That from a man who has devoted a lifetime to dredging up even the most irrelevant trivia, so long as he could associate them in any way with the Kensington stone." Wahlgren demonstrates convincingly that the sketch must be intermediate between an unknown original version and the one on the stone. The carver or carvers obviously had had trouble in accommodating the wording of the inscription to the space available on the stone. Actually, there seem to have existed also other variants of the inscription. Naturally, they have been completely disregarded by Holand. How could a runic inscription from 1362 show competing variants from ca. 1900?

The awareness of Ohman's demonstrable interest in numerology and cryptograms has led Wahlgren to an analysis of the inscription based on the numerical values of runes. He has found several interesting combinations. Some of these, referring to Ohman's name, age, etc., seem rather striking and might have been intended by the carver. But it appears to this reviewer that Wahlgren is inclined to attribute too much subtlety to the "runer," who seems to have had considerable difficulties already with the spelling and the shape of the runic symbols.

If one wonders why the year 1362 was chosen, Wahlgren has found a convincing answer to this question also. 1862 was the year of the Norway Lake Massacre which took place during the great Sioux uprising and was well known to Minnesotans in the 1890's. There is little doubt that Wahlgren's suggestion "that the date '1362' on the stone is humorous for '1862,'" hits the nail on the head.

Wahlgren has done admirable work in exposing Holand's errors, speculations, misleading statements, and tampering with facts. He has not only used all published material but also, through great ingenuity and hard work, brought to light new facts which at every point destroy cogs in Holand's rusty but resistant machinery. He has gathered so much evidence that a fraction of it would suffice to expose the stone as a hoax. If facts and evidence and positive reason mean anything, it is hard to believe that Holand after this book will have one single supporter left. It may be said, though, that the title of the book is a trifle too optimistic. It is true that all available evidence indicates that the stone was carved by Ohman in the 1890's, and probably in 1898,

but Wahlgren has been able to establish this conclusion, not with absolute certainty, but with a probability that almost amounts to certainty. There is still a theoretical possibility that one or two other persons than Ohman have been instrumental in manufacturing the artifact and that this could have been done shortly before 1890.

The book also contains a large number of excellent illustrations and a selective bibliography of writings pertaining to the notorious stone. If Wahlgren were not a fine scholar and ardently devoted to his calling, he would no doubt have been a good writer of mystery stories. This reviewer cannot recall having read a profoundly scholarly work that offers more in the way of thrill, surprise, and spectacular disclosure than Wahlgren's book. Very well written, it is touched up with a good portion of humor and irony to boot.

Anyone who expected that Holand would be silenced by Wahlgren's crushing criticism and conclusive demonstration that the stone is a modern hoax was soon undeceived. Shortly after the appearance of Wahlgren's book, Holand assailed it in three articles in the Madison, Wisconsin, newspaper *The Capital Times*, May 29-31, 1958. Characteristic of Holand's methods is that he had not read the book he was attacking but only a report of it in the newspaper. And this man prides himself on being a scholar! Holand's first article begins: "For 60 years there have been scholars who have sought fame by attempting to prove that the Kensington inscription is a fraud." Who is it that has sought fame—and money? In these articles Holand only repeated the earlier myths and fantasies which had been definitely refuted by Wahlgren and others. It is pathetic to watch Holand's futile but arrogant defense of a lost case. He was reprimanded by Professor Einar Haugen in a dignified article in the same newspaper on June 7, 1958.

In another newspaper, *Svea*, on July 19, 1958, a reviewer of Wahlgren's book, H[enning] N[elson], makes a statement in true Holand style that the opinions about the authenticity of the inscription differ among runologists. This is untrue, but obviously Holand's false statements are still believed.

After the foregoing had been written, the reviewer caught sight of two other contributions to the discussion, published in the October 15, 1958, issue of *American-Scandinavian*, a news-magazine of San Francisco. One article, written by a physician, Dr. E. J. Tanquist, of Alexandria, Minnesota, contains among other statements the following: "In fact Wahlgren has not made one important substantial statement to prove anything he says. . . . The wild statements of Wahlgren of facts about the stone as it concerns this area where found have no foundation in truth." It should be noted that Dr. Tanquist according to *American-Scandinavian* is "one of the most sincere and enthusiastic exponents and promoters of the huge replica of the 'Kensington Rune-stone' which stands in a beautiful park in his city." Would anyone expect Dr. Tanquist to admit that he has promoted a hoax? The other article is a reprinted editorial from the *Park Region Echo*, a weekly of Alexandria, in which John C. Obert tries to discredit a favorable review of Wahlgren's book by J. G. Harrison in *The Christian Science Monitor*. Here it is stated that "no expert who has examined and tested the stone has estimated the age of the inscription at less than fifty [sic] years." Thus does yet another of the many falsehoods that occur in the writings of the Holand phalanx illustrate the kind of support given him. A physician and a newspaper editor consider themselves

more competent to judge runes and linguistics than all of the runologists and specialists in Scandinavian languages. *O sancta simplicitas!*

ASSAR JANZÉN
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Berkeley

The Saga of Gunnlaug Serpent-Tongue. Edited by P. G. Foote. Translated from the Icelandic by R. Quirk. Nelson and Sons, London, 1957. Pp. xxviii+47. Map. \$4.50.

This volume is the first in a series of bilingual critical editions of Icelandic texts to be published by Thomas Nelson and Sons under the general editorship of the eminent scholars Sigurður Nordal and G. Turville-Petre. Among the forthcoming titles are *The Saga of Heiðrek and Hervör*, *The Saga of Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson*, *The Saga of the Völsungs*, *The Saga of the Men of Ljósavatn*, and *The Saga of Bishop Paul and Other Stories of Icelandic Bishops*.

Although *Gunnlaugs saga* has been edited and translated more often than any other saga, it is in many respects the ideal saga with which to begin a series of texts designed to satisfy the needs and interests of both scholar and layman. Its fluent, lucid style and compact brevity make *Gunnlaugs saga* especially suitable for the beginning student of Icelandic, who furthermore can easily check his interpretation of the text by a glance at the English translation on the facing page. For the more advanced student of Icelandic literary history, this saga is significant as "an interesting and by no means wholly unsuccessful experiment in combining the objective realism of the native Icelandic literature with the idyllic sentiment of the foreign romantic stories" (p. xxii). The non-specialist will continue to be delighted and moved by this "romance where Viking valor and love are mingled in proportions which the world was taught to like and demand by Tegnér's *Frithiofs saga*," as Einarsson says on page 146 of *A History of Icelandic Literature*.

In the concise and informative Introduction, Mr. Foote briefly sketches the literary background of *Gunnlaugs saga*. He points out the contribution made to the art of saga writing by three diverse genres: the realistic histories of Ari Þorgilsson hinn fróði and his followers, the orally transmitted extravagant and entertaining *foraldarsögur*, and the translated and native literature of Christian edification. The aim of the writers of the *Íslendinga sögur* was "not historical accuracy but artistic effect," not truth but "the appearance of truth." Whereas the best of these sagas are a "mingling of fact and fantasy in a realistic style," the vogue of the legendary sagas combined with the popularity of the translated French and German romances shifted the precarious balance of truth and fiction more and more toward the romantic and melodramatic. Strongly represented in *Laxdala saga*, the sentimental ideals of chivalry are dominant in *Gunnlaugs saga*, which the editor has characterized as "almost an apotheosis of romantic love." The influence of the foreign romances is most easily seen in the character of Helga, who is, to quote Stefán Einarsson's history "much more closely related to Ophelia and Gretchen than most of the realistic saga-women." In the treatment of his sources, the most important of which are the skaldic verses, the author was influenced by a marked predilection for the dramatic. He "seems eager to interest and divert the reader all the time." To this end he not only retains entertaining but unnecessary episodes, which may be based on oral tradition, but also has to invent

new episodes to make the narrative agree with the statement of the verses. A case in point is Gunnlaug's quarrelsome appearance before Earl Erik. Because of the author's obvious striving for dramatic effect in this scene, he has to invent the trip of Gunnlaug to an Earl Sigurd at Skara. Mr. Foote's criticism that the situation usually determines the action of the characters is justified.

The Introduction is concluded with a brief discussion of the date and place of composition of the saga (which Mr. Foote considers to have been written at or near Borg between about A.D. 1260 and 1300), of the chronology of the historical events, and of the manuscripts.

The text is based on the fourteenth-century vellum *Perg. 4:0 Nr. 18* in the Royal Library in Stockholm, with occasional readings adopted from the fifteenth-century vellum *A. M. 557 4to* in the Arna-Magnaean collection. Those who are familiar with *Gunnlaugs saga* from the popular edition of Valdimar Ásmundarson or from Mogk's school edition will notice a number of different readings in the present volume. The simile describing Helga's hair, for example, is changed from *svá fagrt sem gullband* 'as fair as a golden headband' to *svá fagrt sem gull barit* 'as fair as beaten gold.' The nickname of Auðunn Fettered-Hound is correctly emended from *festargramr* to *festargarmr*. The indication (footnote 1, p. 9), however, that this name ends in *-gram* (dat. sing.) in both manuscripts is not quite correct. In Ms. *A.M. 557 4to* (leaf 5 verso, line 13) it first occurs in the spelling *festangar gramr* (*maðr er Auðunn hét ok var kallaðr festangar gramr*). This form is obviously due to an error in transcription. The nickname later occurs in the form *festargramr* (leaf 6 recto, bottom). One wonders why the form *Gufu-ðröss* is used instead of *Gufúröss*, which is not only the reading of MS. *A.M. 557* but also the spelling on the map in this volume. Another odd form is *Þórness* in place of the conventional *Þórnes*. The change of *þessu næst* to *þessu nær* (p. 8, line 17) is a sensible one; otherwise the almost parenthetical mention of the introduction of Christianity would be unduly emphasized.

Usually I am annoyed by translations of literary works I have read in the original. I must confess, however, that I thoroughly enjoyed reading the masterful English rendition of Mr. Quirk. There is only a slight difference in the level of style between the original and the translation: the latter is somewhat more colloquial than the former. The total English vocabulary probably considerably exceeds that of the Icelandic original—a circumstance which is due partly to the different nature of the two languages and partly to the natural tendency of the modern translator to use greater variety in expression. Thus *opa undan* (p. 29), for example, is once rendered 'draw away' and in the very next line 'shrink back.' On the other hand, the Icelandic occasionally shows greater variety than the English, as when *þá frumvaxta* (nom. pl.; p. 6, line 9) is rendered as 'just grown up at this time' and *mjök roskaðr* (nom. sing.; p. 8, line 7) as 'just about grown up.' Similarly 'Helga the Fair' stands for both *Helga in fagra* and *Helga in vana*. The translation of *goðorð* as 'chieftain's rank' (p. 8, line 2) is unsatisfactory. Why not merely use the anglicized form 'godord' and refer the reader to the excellent Glossary of Technical Terms (pp. 41–43) for an explanation? Nor do I like 'parlour,' which smacks too much of the nineteenth century, as a translation of *stofa* (pp. 7 and 27). To say that 'Gunnlaug struck the shepherd and knocked him out' for *Gunnlaugr laust smalamanninn í óvit* (p. 9), on the other hand, is just a bit too colloquial. Occasionally the English word lacks the emotional content of the Icelandic;

'Jófríð was a woman of great character,' for example, seems flat when compared with *Jófríðr var skrungr mikill* (p. 1). Sometimes the translator is also guilty of the opposite extreme. The translation of *hon verðr aldri afhuga Gunnlaugi* 'her heart never ceased to be Gunnlaug's' (p. 39) is too sentimental even for this saga.

By far the most difficult task in the translation of this saga was posed by the twenty-five skaldic verses. Mr. Quirk succeeded admirably in turning this kenning-laden alliterative verse into understandable prose without destroying the sometimes labored baroque figures of speech. This procedure is preferable to the attempt to reproduce the complicated skaldic poetry by means of simple riming verse. Occasionally the translator oversimplifies the kenning, as when he renders *hríst lauka brims* (verse 20) as 'goddess of ale' and relegates the more vivid literal translation 'goddess of the surf of herbs' to the footnotes. In general, however, his translation of the verse is characterized by discretion and good taste.

The ideal translation, of course, would reproduce the thought of the original verse without destroying the peculiar method of expression. Since this ideal can be achieved only in exceptional cases, Mr. Quirk preferred to preserve the meaning and the kennings of the original at the expense of the external form. Professor Hollander, on the other hand, has retained as much as possible of the complex structure of the original, with its alliteration, internal assonance and rime, stress pattern, parenthetical sentences, etc. Compare Professor Hollander's poetic re-creation of verse Nr. 13 (*The Skalds*, New York, 1945, p. 141) with the literal translation of Mr. Quirk:

Glad days none to Gunnlaug
granted were 'neath mountains'—
hall e'er since to Hrafn was
Helga given, the fair one;
little feared her father—
fie on him: the coward
gave for gold his daughter—
Gunnlaug's poisoned tongue-dart.

For Snake-Tongue no whole day, under the hall of the mountains, was easy, since Helga the Fair had the name of Hrafn's wife;
the white man, the girl's father, paid little heed—the goddess of the horn-thaw was married young for money—to my words. (p. 28)

Both methods obviously have their advantages and disadvantages. Perhaps the ideal way of dealing with this thorny problem would be to follow Professor Hollander's method in the saga itself and to give a literal prose translation of the verse in footnotes.

The use of this book is facilitated, especially for the beginning student of Icelandic or for the general reader, by the excellent glossary of technical terms, the copious footnotes, the index of names, and the map. Unfortunately only a few of the place names are translated. The map would be more useful if it had less detail, so that the saga sites could be more easily found.

Typographical errors are few in number but rather conspicuous. On the back of the handsome dust-jacket the *ð* and *d* are interchanged in the name of Sigurður Nordal. The second *u* in Guðrún Helgadóttir needs an acute accent. *Grágás* needs an acute on the second vowel (p. xxvii). The period is missing at the end of the sentence on p. xxvi following the list of editions of this saga, and in p. 9, line 19 of the Icelandic text. The

r in *sonr* (p. 1, line 9) is either defective or of the wrong font. And *hero* (p. xviii, line 10) should be *hero's*.

This neat slender volume, which bears testimony to the meticulous scholarship of Mr. Foote and Mr. Quirk, contains the definitive edition of *Gunnlaugs saga* as well as the best translation of that saga I have ever read.

PAUL SCHACH
University of Nebraska

Sveinsson, Einar Ól. *Við uppspretturarnar* (Greinasafn). Helgafell, Reykjavík, 1956. Pp. 367.

All those seriously interested in Icelandic literature and cultural history have reason to be grateful for the publication of this selection of articles by Dr. Sveinsson of the University of Iceland. Previously printed in various Icelandic publications, these articles are now made easily accessible, and they more than deserve the greater permanence which they have been accorded within this attractive book.

Professor Sveinsson is a man of great learning, long recognized as one of the outstanding scholars of our day in the field of Old Icelandic literature in particular, although he has also established himself as an authority on Icelandic folk- and fairy-tales, and published noteworthy books and articles on other phases of Icelandic literature as well.

The most notable articles of a general nature deal with the Court Poetry ("Dróttakvæða þáttur"), character-delineation in Old Icelandic literature ("Kýrstaða og þróun í fornum mannlýsingum"), a comparative study "Klýtæmnestri og Hallgerður," the reading knowledge of the Icelanders of old ("Lestrarkunnátta Íslendinga í fornöld"), and the *rímur*-poetry ("Um rímur fyrir 1600 og fleira").

Here are significant articles on writers: Ari fróði (the Learned), Snorri Sturluson, Sveinbjörn Egilsson and Jónas Hallgrímsson, all of whom, occupy a position of great prominence in Icelandic letters. No less than three articles deal with the last named, one of Iceland's most gifted and cherished poets of all time. To non-Icelandic readers, perhaps the detailed discussion of Jónas Hallgrímsson and Heinrich Heine has the strongest appeal; but taken together these articles on Jónas Hallgrímsson constitute a well-rounded and penetrating interpretation of his poetry.

The articles are not confined to Icelandic literature and authors; here are splendid addresses or articles on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, on Goethe's bi-centennial anniversary, on Rasmus C. Rask, and on H. C. Andersen's 150th anniversary. Dr. Sveinsson is mindful of the great writers' cultural and literary ties with Iceland through translations and otherwise.

All the articles reveal not only the author's great learning, but also his insight, imagination and mastery of the Icelandic language. Dr. Einar Ól. Sveinsson possesses to an uncommon degree the qualities of both the scholar and the poet. This circumstance makes his articles not only highly informative and stimulating, but at the same time a delight to read because of his poetic treatment. They exemplify creative scholarship at its best.

RICHARD BECK
University of North Dakota

Ander, O. Fritiof. *The Building of Modern Sweden*, Denkman Memorial Library, Rock Island, Illinois. Pp. 271. \$5.

Ought serious writing to be readable? That is a problem always open to debate. In a stricter sense Professor Ander's book is not entertaining. His history of the swift democratization of Swedish mass psychology during the long reign of Gustav V (1907-1950) is indeed written in clear English prose designed to be transparent, but its psychological implications and historical philosophy are too deep for the average reader. Professor Ander does not enhance and dramatize his narrative in order to arrest public attention, as do so many historians today.

Possibly the following passage is the most significant in this book:

The voice of August Strindberg in 1900 seems somehow to be reechoed in the voice of Pär Lagerkvist in 1958. It seems both historically and psychologically sound that the voice of Strindberg should be more Swedish and influenced less by alien influences than the voice of Lagerkvist, which is one of universal fatalism. Yet Strindberg's world of reality found an echo in Eugene O'Neill, and it seemed fitting that the great American playwright and disciple of Strindberg should will that his play 'Long Day's Journey into Night,' should first be staged in Sweden. O'Neill must have believed that he had his most appreciative and understanding audience in the land of Strindberg.

In my opinion derived from this history, militarism was the specialty of Sweden in the seventeenth century. In that era Sweden conquered warlike Germany with very little outside help excepting some generous loans from wealthy Jews. In the eighteenth century Sweden mass psychology glorified science, and Linnaeus, Swedenborg, Polhem, and Celsius illuminated not only Sweden but all Europe and America. In the nineteenth century Swedish mass psychology demanded excellence chiefly in the arts: painting, sculpture, music, and literature. And now, in our first half-century, invention, manufacturing, and the satisfaction of labor were in the ascendant.

And Gustav V, who presided over the democratization of Sweden, was not only an expert hunter and tennis player but a really great statesman. He was the guardian of Sweden's good inheritance and the policeman who calmed manifestations of changes too radical for the public good. He kept Sweden out of two world wars, and sanctioned his people in their idealistic effort to create a model state, both in public health and social behavior.

As Professor Ander observes, to many Americans Sweden's neutrality in the last world war and the help Sweden gave both sides seemed irrational. Sweden supplied iron to Germany and, at the same time, fed with wheat the children of Greece who were being starved by the Germans. But to many Swedes our American belligerency seemed even more irrational!

Happily this book is dedicated to the late G. Hilmer Lundbeck Senior, whose success as manager of The Swedish American Line and whose unstinted generosity to impecunious scholars did much to cement the relations of Sweden and the United States.

HENRY GODDARD LEACH
The American-Scandinavian Foundation

NOTES

MEETING. The forty-ninth annual meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study will be held at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, on Friday, May 1, and Saturday, May 2, 1959.

FIRST SESSION, Friday, May 1, 1 P.M.

Welcome . . . President Conrad Bergendoff, Augustana College.

Reading and Discussion of Papers:

1. Professor Assar Janzén, University of California, Berkeley: *Scandinavian Place-Names in England* (20 min.)
2. Professor Cecil Wood, Yale University: *An Anonymous Stanza from the "Sturlunga Saga"* (20 min.)
3. Professor Jóhann Hannesson, Cornell University: *Luck, Fate, and Charity in the "Vatnsdala Saga"* (20 min.)
4. Professor Richard B. Vowles, University of Florida: *The Structure of Anguish: Strindberg's "Crimes and Crimes"* (20 min.)
5. Professor Børge Gedsø Madsen, University of California, Berkeley: *Björnson's "Beyond Human Power" and Munk's "The Word"* (20 min.)
6. Professor Erik Wahlgren, University of California, Los Angeles: *Viking Shorthand* (20 min.)

Appointment of Committees . . . President E. Gustav Johnson

ANNUAL DINNER, 7 P.M.

AFTERDINNER PROGRAM, 8:15 P.M.

Address . . . President Nils Sahlin, Quinncipiac College

SECOND SESSION, Saturday, May 2, 8:30 A.M.

Business Meeting

Report of the Managing Editor
Report of the Secretary-Treasurer
New business

Reading and Discussion of Papers:

7. Professor Karl-Ivar Hildeman, Harvard University: *The Last Period of the Scandinavian Ballad* (20 min.)
8. Professor Foster W. Blaisdell, Indiana University: *The Verb-Adverb Locution in Certain Old Icelandic Manuscripts* (20 min.)
9. Professor Richard Beck, University of North Dakota: *Icelandic Poets of North Dakota* (20 min.)
10. Professor Walter Johnson, University of Washington: *Strindberg and the Dance Macabre* (20 min.)

Members of the society and all others interested in the advancement of Scandinavian study are invited to attend. For room and dinner reservations, write Mr. Nils Hasselmo, Department of Swedish, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois.

AUGUSTANA. Since it was founded in 1860, Augustana College has actively supported Scandinavian study. In addition to offering courses that lead to a bachelor's degree in Swedish language and literature, the college has acquired one of the finest American library collections of Swedish books and Swedish-Americana, encouraged Scandinavian cultural activities of many kinds, and has achieved the distinction of general recognition as one of the outstanding liberal arts colleges in the country. The college and its department of Swedish have been hosts to our society several times; the late Professor Jules Mauritzson, for many years head of Augustana's Swedish department, was

one of the founders of SASS. His successor, Professor Arthur Wald, has given enthusiastic support to the society. One of the notable achievements during Professor Wald's headship was the founding of the Augustana Swedish Institute in 1940, which, among many other activities, has published five volumes of a reference book, *The American-Swedish Handbook* (1943, 1945, 1948, 1953, and 1958) and *The Institute Bulletin*, which in February and September of each year has brought readers throughout the country not only news about what the Institute has done in the Rock Island area but news of developments in Swedish study throughout the country. Through its bulletin, the Institute has provided information about recent Swedish books and, through its liberal Book Loan Plan, "an opportunity for members to secure Swedish books from the Augustana College Library on loan by mail."

SUMMER SCHOOL. Since 1945 the Augustana Swedish Institute has conducted a popular Summer School of Swedish. During a six-weeks' session, students are able to earn seven semester college credits in the courses for beginning or advanced Swedish and an area course on Sweden. In 1959, the summer school will be brought to Sweden. Information about this highly promising combination of the study of Swedish language and culture and direct contact with Sweden and its people can be obtained by writing directly to the Augustana Swedish Institute, Augustana College.

HALLDÓR HERMANSSON. One of our most distinguished members, Professor Halldór Hermansson, died in Ithaca, New York, on August 29. Born in Iceland on January 6, 1878, he received one degree in Iceland in 1898, another in Copenhagen

in 1899, and an honorary Ph.D. from the University of Iceland in 1943. From 1905 until 1946, he was curator of the Fiske Icelandic Collection and teacher of Scandinavian at Cornell University. An authority on Old Norse and Icelandic history, literature, language and bibliography, Professor Hermansson edited the great series, *Islandica*, to which he contributed well over twenty volumes. Among the many forms of recognition for his outstanding achievements were, in addition to the honorary doctorate, the Icelandic Order of the Falcon and honorary memberships in the Icelandic Literary Society and the Medieval Academy. He was a trustee of the American-Scandinavian Foundation.

EDWIN VICKNER. On September 29, Professor Edwin J. Vickner passed away at St. Peter, Minnesota. Born in Stockholm on February 12, 1879, Edwin Vickner came to America in his teens, received his B.A. (1901), M.A. (1902), and Ph.D. (1906) at the University of Minnesota, and, in 1903, became professor of modern languages at Gustavus Adolphus College. Between 1902 and 1910, he studied for periods of varying length at the Sorbonne, Leipzig, Berlin, and Brussels, and in Scandinavia. In 1912, he succeeded David Nyvall as professor of Scandinavian languages and literature at the University of Washington; through devotion to the cause of Scandinavian study and energetic effort, he succeeded in developing the department there until it became, enrollment-wise, the largest in the country. Until 1934, he was the only teacher in the department. When he retired in 1948, he accepted a one-year visiting professorship at Upsala College and the following year a similar position at Gustavus Adolphus. Since 1950, he had been living at Balaton and on the Gustavus campus.

During his years in Seattle, he participated actively in the off-campus activities of all the Scandinavian groups; in recognition of his contributions, he was awarded the Royal Order of Vasa (1916), the Order of St. Olaf (1932) and the Order of the North Star (1947). For many years, his *Simplified Swedish Grammar* and *Swedish Composition and Word Study* were used throughout the country. During the last few years Dr. Vickner and his widow, Dr. Bertha Almen Vickner, were particularly active in building up the Almen-Vickner Foundation at Gustavus and were instrumental in making the Bernadotte Foundation at the college highly successful in developing the college library and scholarship program. One newspaper account credits the Vickners with donations to the college of well over \$100,000.

CORRESPONDENCE STUDY. Both the University of Minnesota and the University of California offer home-study courses in Scandinavian. Descriptive bulletins and application blanks may be secured by writing to Correspondence Study Department, General Extension Division, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 14, or to Department of Correspondence Instruction, University of California Extension, Berkeley 4, respectively. Courses available from Minnesota are: Beginning Norwegian I, which includes a complete survey of Norwegian grammar, composition, and the reading of easy prose; Norwegian II, which stresses the reading of short stories; and a third course, based on the reading of Bjørnson's novel, *Synnøve Solbakken*. These courses are taught by Mr. M. J. Nelson, Instructor in Scandinavian. Professor Alrik T. Gustafson, Chairman of the Department of Scandinavian, teaches Beginning Swedish, I and II. Each of these courses

grants five semester credits. It should be added that high-school courses, granting 1 credit each, are available for Norwegian I and II and Swedish I and II, taught by these same instructors.

The three courses centered in California are all in Icelandic. Course X150, Elementary Modern Icelandic, aids the student in acquiring a reading knowledge, and some writing knowledge, of modern Icelandic. This course is continued by X151, Intermediate Modern Icelandic, both courses conferring four units of credit. Facility in reading modern Icelandic brings with it the tremendous advantage of opening up that great body of writing known as "the saga literature." The nominal prerequisite to enrollment in these courses is successful completion on the college level of one year of any foreign language or two years of a language in high school. This requirement may be waived for students who already have some background in the Icelandic language. The text used is Stefán Einarsson's *Icelandic: Grammar, Texts, Glossary*. A third course, X152, Modern Icelandic Literature in English Translation, grants three units of credit. All of these courses are administered by Professor Loftur L. Bjarnason of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California.

TRANSLATION. Paul Schach's translation of Agnar Þórðarson's short story, "The Thief," appeared in *Prairie Schooner* (Vol. 32, No. 3, Fall, 1958). In a later issue of the same magazine will appear a translation of parts of the novel, *Ef sverð þitt er stult*.

BELATEDLY REPORTED. Dr. Richard Beck lectured extensively on Scandinavian subjects during the spring and summer months of 1958. When he visited the University of California at Berkeley in

early May to preside over the annual meeting of our society, he gave a public lecture on Icelandic literature under the auspices of the Scandinavian Department of the University and also addressed a banquet in San Francisco given in his honor by the Icelandic Society of Northern California. His address, "From the Viking Ships to Kon-Tiki," was featured in the June number of *American-Scandinavian*. In June Dr. Beck addressed four annual conventions of Norwegian-American "bygdelags" in Minnesota and North Dakota, speaking in Norwegian on Norwegian cultural values. On July 27 he was the main speaker at the annual Icelandic celebration in the Peace Arch Park at Blaine, Washington, where he spoke in Icelandic on "Ancestral Land and Cultural Heritage." As president of the Icelandic National League of America, he also addressed Icelandic groups in Vancouver, B.C., Blaine, and Seattle.

SUMMER SCHOOL. The Department of Scandinavian at the University of Washington will offer the following courses during the first half of the coming summer quarter: The Scandinavian Novel in English Translation (novels concerning the Scandinavian emigration), Strindberg and His Major Plays in English Translation, Supervised Study in Swedish Literature, and a thesis course. Inquiries about the summer school should be addressed to the Director of the Summer Session, University of Washington, Seattle 5.

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In cooperation with the Norwegian Joint Committee on International Social Policy, the University of Wisconsin Press has recently taken over distribution, in the United States, of this committee's publications on Norwegian social and labor policy.

This new survey, *Health Services in Norway*, explains the Norwegian system of health services in brief; what they include, how they are organized and paid for, recent developments and future plans. The aim has been to interest the general reader, as well as to inform the student of social policy and the expert in public health, on how Norwegians handle the essential problem of health care for all in modern society.

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The second in this series of publications by the Norwegian Joint Committee on International Social Policy, *Labor Relations in Norway*, was written by Herbert Dorfman, an American journalist who made a special study of Norwegian labor relations as a Fulbright scholar in 1956-57.

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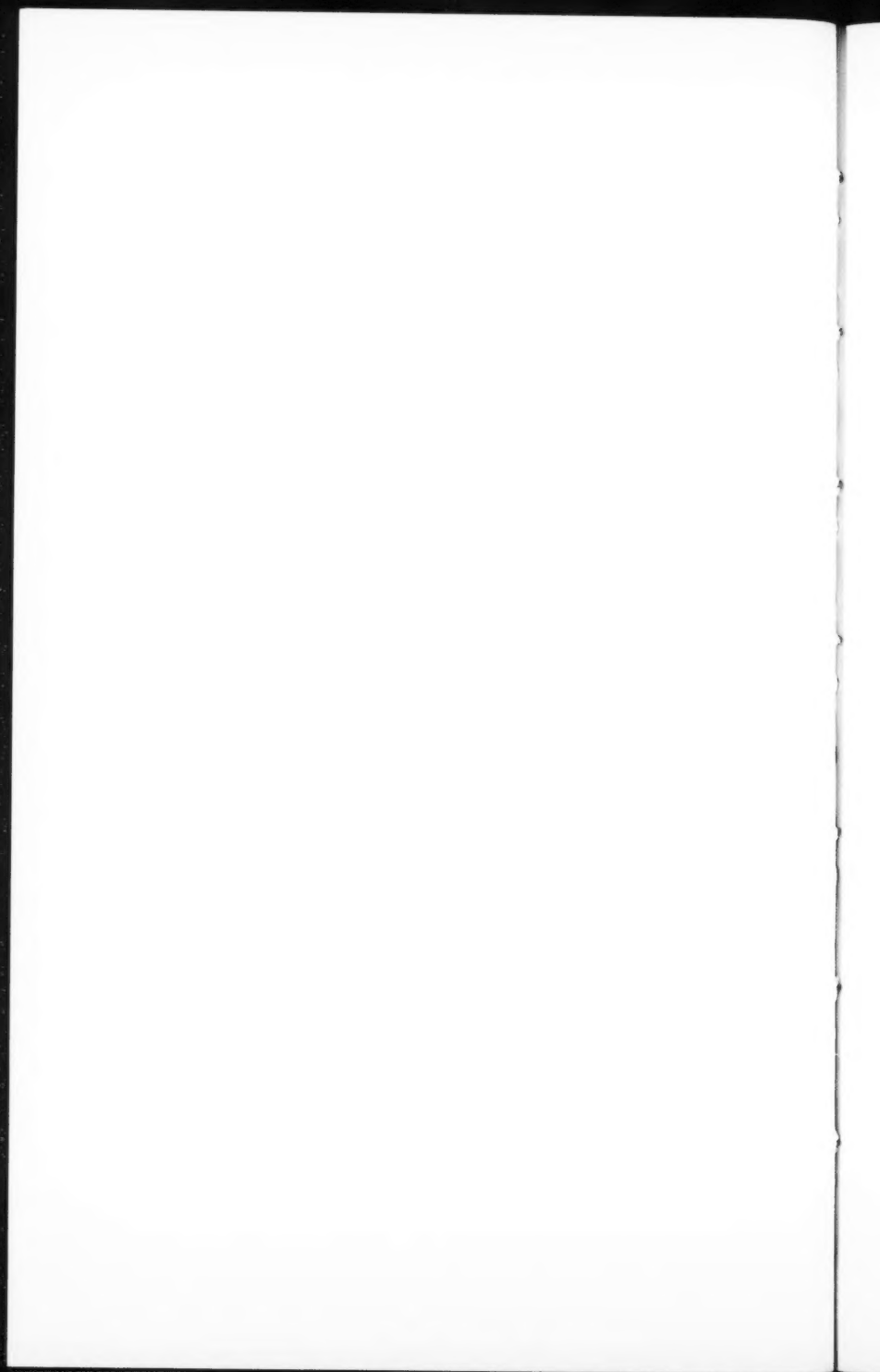
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BOOKS RECEIVED

Lars Alfvengrens *r-genitiv och are-komposition*, Almqvist & Wicksell, Uppsala, 1958.—O. Fritiof Ander's *The Building of Modern Sweden*, Augustana College Library, Rock Island, 1958.—Kenneth O. Bjork's *West of the Great Divide*, Norwegian-American Historical Association, Northfield, 1958.—*Dansk Nytaar 1959*, Lutheran Publishing House, Blair, Nebraska, 1958.—Herbert Dorfman's *Labor Relations in Norway*, Committee on International Social Policy, Oslo, 1958.—Karl Evang's *Health Services in Norway*, Committee on International Social Policy, Oslo, 1957 (Distributed, along with the Dorfman volume, by the University of Wisconsin Press, Madison).—Ralph Paul de Gorog's *The Scandinavian Element in French and Norman*, Twayne-Bookman

Associates, New York, 1958.—L. M. Hollander's *A Bibliography of Skaldic Studies*, Munksgaard, Copenhagen, 1958.—Gösta Holms *Syntaxgeografiska studier över två nordiska verb*, Lundequist, Uppsala, 1958.—Maurice Michael's *Haakon King of Norway*, Macmillan, New York, 1958.—*Ortnamnen i Göteborgs- och Bohuslän*, Blom, Lund, 1958.—Hans Ronges *Konung Alexander: Filologiska studier i en fornsvensk text*. Inst. för nordiska språk, Uppsala, 1957.—Frank Noel Stagg's *South Norway*, Macmillan, New York, 1958.—*Studier i nordisk språkvetenskap I*, Gleerup, Lund, 1958.—*The Year's Work in Modern Language Studies, XVIII*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1957.

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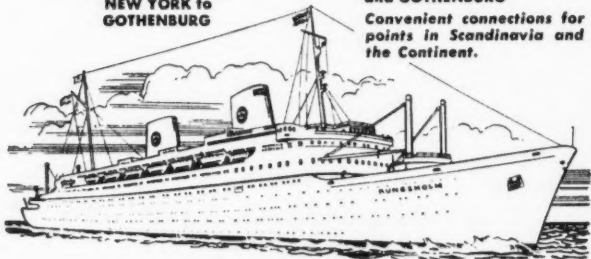
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